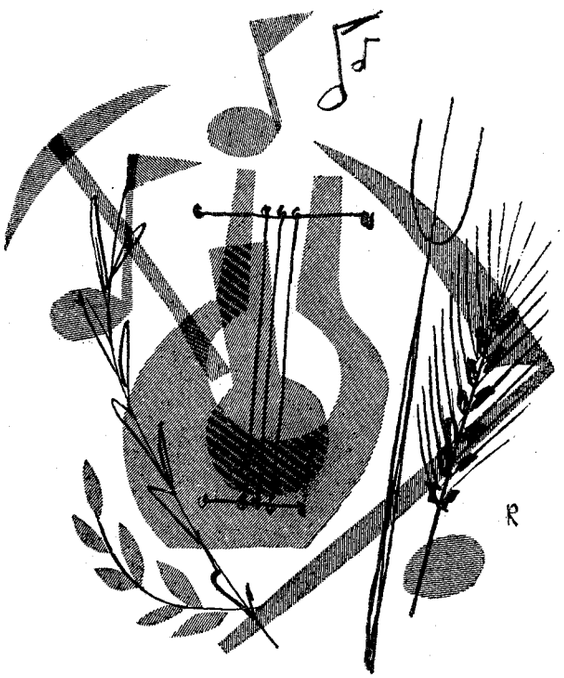
JULY 31
1945

NEW MASSES

15¢
In Canada
20¢

SPECIAL CULTURAL ISSUE



Art Young Memorial Award
For Poetry

"SOLDIER SONG" by Floyd Wallace

Chosen by

Alfred Kreymborg, Isidor Schneider, Wiliam Rose Benet, Mark Van Doren

Poems by Dilys Bennet Laing, Eve Merriam, Joy Davidman, Elizabeth Travers, John Sanford, Don Gordon, Doris Bauman, Aaron Kramer.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE: The Dilemma of the Jewish Writer, by Nathan Ausubel; Men and Machines, by Dorothy Brewster; Poetry: For Whom? by Isidor Schneider; Pablo Neruda: Poet and Statesman, by Samuel Putnam.

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BETWEEN OURSELVES

WE ARE happy to announce that Pablo Neruda, the world famous Chilean poet and a leading figure in Latin American cultural life, has become a contributing editor of NEW MASSES. In addition to what Samuel Putnam says of him on page 25, we know him to be a recently elected member of Chile's Senate. And when he is not writing verse or attending to his political duties he is busy with one of the finest collections of seashells we have ever seen.

WE GOT to thinking as we were collecting the art work for the cultural issue of the time some years ago when we were part of a small college faculty, and found ourselves sharing in what was then considered a pretty radical idea in education, the resident artist. We remember some interesting experiences from the resident artists we knew and worked with, and we think it is one of the better substitutes for starving in a garret.

Our first resident artist was a painter, who chose for his year's project a fresco to be painted around the walls of the corridor leading to the college dining room, where no student could miss either the end product or the process. The first shock the students got the day Rickey appeared. While some of them had been in the art galleries of Detroit and Chicago, few had ever had a close look before at a practicing artist, and they had their ideas about what artists were like. They weren't prepared for the huge Paul Bunyan frame, the self-confident blue eyes and the plaid shirt (the normal country and school costume of this area) and routine hair-cut. But they liked it, and the idea that the artist was a sissy died right there. The rest of the process they loved—all except the dean of women, who couldn't bear the mess being tracked up and down the carpets all day long, nor the Bach, Mozart and boogie-woogie that Rickey insisted on playing on his phonograph while he worked, quiet hours or no. They hauled lime and water for him, they spread the patches of plaster, they posed, hours on end, for the auto workers at a drill press, the housewife at her canning, and they watched as the familiar faces became outlined in plaster, and criticized the likenesses even though Rickey painstakingly explained they weren't meant to be portraits. And they did a lot of drawing and messing around in paints that year, including boys who wouldn't have been caught with a brush in hand before.

The sculptor who came the following year undertook a bronze fountain for the town square (the little town of some 500 soults was built around a square with a flagpole in the center), to be a memorial to the pioneer Father Shipherd who had literally hewn it out of the wilderness. After the long preliminaries of making scale models and collecting materials, both students and town came to watch and participate as the pipes and wire of the armature were screwed together for "the horse," and the fine private collection of Gothic sculpture in wood and alabaster and polychrome which the sculptor had collected over years became a sight that people came from hundreds of miles to see. Students who had milked cows and pitched hay and who in some cases had never been in a museum, could be found digging their hands into the tub full of clay every afternoon, modelling the heads of other students, or whatever struck their fancy. And the results were often remarkably full of life.

There were pitfalls in the project, and we stumbled into them. A famous novelist whose name was a household word spent some weeks on campus. He was meant to stay longer, but the students wouldn't take his sneering philosophy and passed their own form of judgment on him. First they argued back, then they stayed away. The late Ford Madox Ford also spent one of his declining years there, writing mornings, receiving students at certain specified hours for the criticism of their work, and presiding at teas. But Ford spoke an English that was something beyond Oxford, ornamented with a wide array of classical allusions that were literally Greek to most of his audience. Moreover, Ford spoke of a time and hopes that seemed long ago and far away. Your Midwest student is not likely to be impressed that you were dandled on Oscar Wilde's knee. Few came to tea, and of the few that came, some were corralled.

We like to imagine the day when teachers of art and writing are mostly practitioners, when the artists in residence are less lions and more a part of the very wonderful process that education can be, and we think that the ABC of the artist's problem, that he needs time and food to become and be an artist, finds one of its answers here. V. S.

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Two weeks' notice is requested for change of address. Notification sent to NEW MASSES rather than the Post Office will give the best results. Vol. LVI, No. 5. Published by THE NEW MASSES, INC., 104 East Ninth Street, New York 3, N. Y.

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Entered as second-class matter, June 23, 1926, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies 15 cents. Subscriptions $5.00 a year in U. S. and Colonies and Mexico; six months $2.75; three months $1.50. Foreign, $6.00 a year; six months $3.25; three months, $1.75. In Canada $6.00 a year, $3.50 for six months, U. S. money; single copies in Canada 20c Canadian money. NEW MASSES welcomes the work of new writers and artists. Manuscripts and drawings must be accompanied by stamped, addressed envelope.

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NEW MASSES
VOL. LVI JULY 31, 1945 NO. 5

The Art Young Memorial Award Poem

Soldier Song

By Floyd Wallace

When I come home
When I come home
Unpack the sun, unwrap the moon
And turn on all the stars in sight
I'm gonna stand in the grass near the porch
And look at my own yard for a week.

I've hiked holes in a stranger's trails
And slept with a stump for a pillow
He's got a land that's fine I think
But mine knows me like a brother

When I come home
When I come home
I'm gonna jump from a streamline train
Into sunlight yellow as butter
Like a leaf, like a happy leopard
Or a soldier, home from the war

I'm gonna touch each fence and tree
And name each street at the corner
Hang out the town like a blue work shirt
That still fits right on a soldier

When I come home
When I come home
With my hands grown big on guns
I wanna job as big as my hands
And after the whistle each night I'll go
And wash them at Boulder Dam

Mountains and stone and miles of iron
Bridges and planes and a school or two
And if you want, on my overtime
I'll stoke up the sun for you

When I come home
When I come home
I wanna wear my laughing shoes
And walk around like a river
I wanna buy some rocket clothes
And live like a slice of summer

I've gotta staircase in my heart
And I've gotta long-legged dream
That waits at the top of the breathless steps
Till I come home from the war.

WHEN our beloved colleague, Art Young, died we thought there could be no more fitting memorial to him than to continue, in his name, the deep and abiding interest he always had in the work of younger artists and writers. Thus were born the Art Young Memorial Awards for poetry, the short story, reportage, and art (cartoon or painting). In our last cultural issue we announced the winners in the art competition and in this one we take pleasure in presenting the names of the prize winner in the poetry contest and his runners-up. The judges in the contest—William Rose Benet, Alfred Kreymborg, Isidor Schneider and Mark Van Doren—gave the prize of $100 to Floyd Wallace of Los Angeles, California, for his poem, "Soldier Song," published on this page. Those who in the opinion of the judges merit special mention for the excellence of their contributions are Dilys Laing, Eve Merriam, Joy Davidman, Elizabeth Travers, John Sanford, Don Gordon, Aaron Kramer, Doris Bauman, Seymour Gregory, Martha Millet, Alan Whyte and Robert Whittington. The majority of their poems appear in this special cultural issue and the others will be published subsequently. Several of the poems appeared in earlier numbers of NEW MASSES: "Seymour Keidan," by Aaron Kramer (April 10), "Thoughts on a Fallen American," by Alan Whyte and "Hands," by Martha Millet (Dec. 19, 1944).

The deadline for the short-story contest is November 15. Entries should be addressed to Art Young Memorial Awards, c/o NEW MASSES, 104 East Ninth Street, New York 3, N. Y. Stories are to be not longer than 3,500 words, and are to be typed, double spaced, on one side of the paper. Incomplete list of judges includes Whit Burnet, editor of *Story* magazine, Leane Zugsmith and Isidor Schneider. Judges, members of the staff of NEW MASSES and their families are ineligible.

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Great and Small

I lost the world, the magical
blueweathered world of smell and sound
by growing up to five foot six.
At this sane distance from the ground
the child's dominions shrivel small,
his rafts are doormats and his guns are sticks.

And yet a child, not I, but mine,
continues in that world of sense
and makebelieve, to breathe and dream.
My past is in his present tense.
I know, but cannot cross, that line
near which he watches what I am, or seem.

O questioner with candid eyes
held wide to drink all wonder deep
till disenchantment drowns their blue!
You long to buy (and think it cheap)
stature with innocence. But size
increased, can dwindle what you are, and do.

DILYS BENNETT LAING.

Penn Station: War Year

As huge as heat this panting arsenal
where parting like heat pervades our very clothes,
hangs sticky over all.

Where seeping everywhere like sweat
the seconds of the clock roll salty down,
frantic we dab *Not yet!*

With humid hands the lovers enfold each other
identical and cheap in public passion,
exposed as summer weather.

So you my groom of war, and I your bride of wait,
packed close as heat beside the others here,
our love as crude as common and as great.

EVE MERRIAM.

Judges for the Art Young Memorial Award Contest (left to right): WILLIAM ROSE BENET, ALFRED KREYMBORG, ISIDOR SCHNEIDER, MARK VAN DOREN.

Quisling at Twilight

Houses are quiet at evening. The sad colors
are sliding down the cypresses. Quiet, quiet.
Eyes look out of the sky, and the roof hides you
but the house is quiet.
So many empty chairs,
so many handsome rooms and no one in them
but the company of lights.

Turn on all the lights. Sit in the armchair,
not the one facing the mirror but the one
next to the friendly fire but no not there
where the fire makes pictures out of memory; there
next the window but no not that the glimmering pane
shows you your eyes; here here by the desk
but you see your face in the polish of the desk

So much fine furniture but it costs too much
at evening with the sad colors and the voices
you know it costs too much.

The beetle ticks in the walls.
The woman beaten till the child in her womb
leaped once and was dead, is sobbing in the garden
under the parrot perches.

The broken fingers
of the twelve-year-old boy scuttle across the floor
or was it rats again
So many rats
and someone here to feed them.

(but you meant no harm did you and there was nothing
else you could do was there and they promised order
a new order and you thought they would win
and there was a standard of living to maintain and a blonde
and you were afraid

and somebody had to keep the mob in its place
and you were afraid

and after all you were never the one who did the killing)

The desk and the mirror and the windowpane.
Nowhere to go where you cannot see your face.

The dead hands fumble for the latch.

JOY DAVIDMAN.

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Poetry: For Whom?

By Isidor Schneider

THIS poetry contest confirms what every editor knows, that the impulse to write poetry, always general and spontaneous, received an added stimulus from the war. Well over 2,000 entries were received, of which a large proportion had a wartime subject. Edwin Seaver, collecting material for the second issue of his literary yearbook, *Cross-Section*, reported a similar inflow. The poems fell into two main divisions with, of course, a number unplaceable in either. One was plain, direct expression, often quite bare, often a versified essay or narrative that would be prose but for rhetorical interjections and the lines the poems were broken into. In this kind of poetry the war was the most frequent subject. Its virtue was unaffected emotion; its vice a banality of form veering between Kipling and Whitman. The other kind was the "modern," in all its desperately sought variety. Its "novelties" were, too often, obvious contrivances such as startling and arbitrary alliteration, or having the adjective contradict the noun, or oblique rhyming, or scattering the parts of a dissected phrase through the stanzas. Most of it had its own banality, the banality of cynicism. After seeing hundreds of both I found the first type of banality more tolerable than the second, and much less pathetic. In the second group, the fear of banality was obsessive. In much of it one heard the accents of an anxiety neurosis.

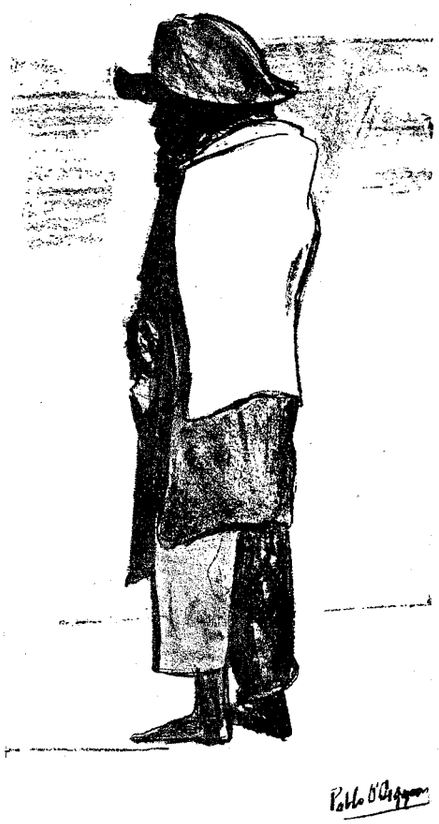
Nevertheless they wrote. My experience here, as in the past, is such as to convince me that there need never be a fear of a dearth of poetry. The emotionally responsive, particularly the young, will always write it. It is the second half of the process, the communication to an audience, that continues to be the critical problem. In the following I will touch on some of its facets.

SOME years ago I found myself in the awkward position of being together, in a small group, with a man whose poem I had rejected. He took advantage of the occasion to challenge my judgment by reading the poem aloud. He read it very well and his audience turned reproachful glances at me. The reading impressed me, too, and I asked to have the poem back.

At my desk, the next morning, I read it again and wondered what I had heard in it the night before. I had to read it slowly, with pauses and emphases for the rhythm, and lengthening of the vowel syllables for sonority, to recover the effects it had had then. I had to read it, literally, for the ear, not for the eye.

This called for deliberate effort; for reading is done with the eye and the mind; and gradually poetry has come to be written for them instead of for the ear and the emotions. For our response to sound is mainly emotional; and to the eye mainly intellectual. Biologists tell us that the brain is largely a proliferation of the optic nerve. It is not strange, therefore, that so much of the poetry written for the eye is cerebral.

This has brought some gains but greater losses. Techniques of communication may be developed to recover pleasures in cadence and vocalization. After all it was a technological and social change, the invention of reading and the secularization of education, that led to writing for the eye; and radio, or some new thing, may return it to the ear. But this much we know, that aural and emotional values have been lost to poetry, and the loss has reduced its public. The substitutes, typographical devices, complexity and erudite allusions, have proved inadequate to hold audiences.



Pencil sketch, by Pablo O'Higgins.

A SECOND factor is what might be called the masterpiece complex. The basis for this is clear. We all want to see the champion, the virtuoso, the prodigy, the master. But whereas in other fields it is regarded and enjoyed as the exception, in poetry it is demanded as the norm. It is the masterpiece or nothing. To say of a novel that it is readable is its best recommendation; to say that of a poem is to arouse suspicion. It is considered a crime for a publisher to print a book of verse not authenticated as a masterpiece; and for the reader unpardonably bad taste to enjoy it.

This has led to an esthetic puritanism as inhibiting as sexual puritanism. An example to point this up: I once saw a man in the subway reading, with evident absorption, a book whose slimness identified it as a volume of poetry. I knew the reader and, when a seat beside him was vacated, took it. On my greeting him he hastily shut the book, the jacket of which, I noticed for the first time, had been reversed to the blank side to hide the title. He blushed as if he had been caught reading erotica. The book, it turned out, had been reviewed as "mediocre" and its author was regarded as no "master." My friend tried to explain away his reading of it, then felt impelled to explain the explanation. This led to a discussion which, if it cleared up nothing else, made plain the abormality of a situation in which a reader felt guilty for reading readable poems. On the reverse side of the medal are the established modern masterpieces where, often, people are content with the mere fact of possession. Of the original edition of Eliot's *Waste-land* I have seen as many copies with pages uncut as cut.

To ask of an art that it should manage without its portion of the mediocre is asking the impossible. One can hope for a rise, or fear a lowering of the level

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of the average. But the average—that is, the mediocre—will always be with us. The masterpiece must have the average to grow out of.

FORMERLY I thought the reason for this was the publishers' promotion. I said they have the job of somehow selling for two-and-a-half to three dollars an amount of reading matter that the purchaser can get for a dime in one of the advertising-subsidized magazines. To justify the price the publisher, I said, puts his product between cloth covers to give it an appearance of permanence. And everything else, in his presentation, is designed to make the purchaser feel that he is getting "literature," that is, the permanent thing in printed matter. This applies to the reviewing in the chief literary media, which depend on publishers' advertising and which are in more or less conscious collusion with them to foster the presumption of the permanence of the hard-covered book. I said this is so particularly with the "slim" poetry books, where the disparity in volume and price is greatest. But the publisher miscalculated, I said. He oversold permanence and the result was the virtual disappearance of poetry as a publishing product.

For some time this did me as explanation. But it left unanswered why permanence should be oversold in only one field of publishing. The problem, I realized, went deeper.

Poetry, as the outpost of literary "purity," shows most disastrously the effects of the separation of literature from life. I return to an analogy I have used before—poetry as the "sleeping beauty" of the arts. To get to the sleeping beauty, it will be recalled, thickets of brambles, walls of fire and other obstacles have to be overcome. Even there, if one is not the predestined Prince Charming his kiss will not awaken the sleeper and all his hardships will have been purposeless.

Poetry is currently located at such a magical world's end; its "enjoyment" is conceived to be just such an arduous quest. Consequently people generally are content to do without that burdensome "pleasure," leaving it to neurotics who require an hour of suffering for a minute of elation. The relation between writer and reader has thus become morbid, and it is understandable why so many poets draw on their most painful private emotions, particularly the sense of frustration.

But most of all, contemporary poetry seems to me to be suffering from an arrested development toward a people's poetry. When the genteel tradition in American culture went down in the nineteen hundreds, the victory was part of the general insurgence which among other advances, brought out a Socialist vote of a million in an electorate less than half of today's.

In poetry two currents were then merged in one main stream of revolt; a surge against literary conventions with Amy Lowell and Pound, and later Eliot as its major figures, and a surge toward the plain people with Vachel Lindsay, Carl Sandburg and Edgar Lee Masters in the lead. The progressive movement was halted during the war and was, indeed, the major American war casualty. In its international phase the progressive movement was defeated by the Senate saboteurs of the League of Nations; in its domestic phase the progressive movement went under before the postwar repression which was followed by that era of neurotic Philistinism—the Coolidge prosperity.

In poetry the two trends, formerly merged, separated. The official smile, and the approval of the literary fashionables of the Coolidge era, went to the Pound-Eliot School, to what might be called the poetry of social nihilism which was to be revealed, in time, as proto-fascism.

When the Coolidge prosperity collapsed the movement toward a people's poetry had a resurgence in the "proletarian thirties." It was precarious and brief. It lasted only through the first years of the New Deal. In the late thirties reaction recovered its ground and instituted a repression that took indirect forms like the "cold" pogrom against Jews in Poland. Left intellectuals were "investigated" out of their livelihood. A diffused, semi-official persecution virtually ended freedom of speech for the Left writer. Most of his markets were cut off; and, in the left press, he was compelled to use pseudonyms. Huge newspaper chains and million-circulation magazines joined in an unprecedented smear campaign which has now settled into a normal feature, like comics and columnists.

THE movement toward a people's poetry in the thirties was perhaps the most conscious in our literary history. Never before had the problems been faced so directly. At first, both problems and solutions were over-simplified, the problem being put in moral terms. To write proletarian poetry was literary virtue; not to write it was literary sin. And shortcomings in the poetry written were taken to be outcroppings of hidden sin.

But experience showed that the problem was more complex and there were no simple solutions. The poets wanted to write for the people; but who were the people? They were workers and farmers and professionals, of whom the farmers and most of the workers were physically and psychologically inaccessible. In practical terms the "people" whom the poet could hope to reach were restricted to professionals and a few self-educated workers.

To reach them the poet had a left-wing press, none of whose periodicals had a circulation above 30,000; for a brief period the liberal weeklies, whose circulation was no larger; and finally, occasional and begrudged book publication which was generally sabotaged in the major review mediums.

Many poets sought to reach beyond to a mass audience. If they were mature poets this called for a retraining for which history denied them the requisite time, even where it did not prove to be more than they could manage. In addition to the personal remaking the poet found himself operating in a cultural medium corrupted by yellow journalism, radio inanity and the cinema subconsciousness. With such obstacles what was achieved in ballads, satirical skit verses and agit-prop declamations was considerable.

A DIAGNOSIS should, of course, be followed with a prescription. In this case, however, I am a doctor without even a pharmacy to direct my patient to.

I can speak of immediate necessities such as a Left literary magazine. But that would be a minimum solution. To reach the people, to develop a people's poetry, the foundation need is a people's press.

For me the best hope for that lies in the trade union press. Only part of it is now a satisfactory press. Much of it is dull and parochial. But the trade unions contain the best prospective audience for a Left literature. The union press offers a potential reader interest and reader loyalty such as no other press holds any promise of.

How to develop the trade union press into a people's press is something I am without the experience to advise on. I look to trade unionists with a concern for people's culture, to give a hand in such a development. They can expect ardent support from all Left writers and particularly from the poets.

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Lullaby, 1941

It is seldom night comes everywhere at once
I have never seen an evening so immense,
To drowse with moonlight in the present tense—
Sleep

The houses sleep with blackout at their panes
Lulled into slumber by the hum of planes
And cities with the gunbeat in their veins
Sleep

Soldiers in bivouac, girls in their beds alone
Twist the skein of living flesh and bone
To the factory's lever or the levelled gun—
Sleep

The mind lies down somewhere behind a word
Stamped on a press or bulletined or heard
Across terse airwaves in the great absurd
Sleep

The heart between tomorrow and the day before
Island explored too late and the land it may never explore
Furls its dreams and waits and does not stir
Sleep

O sleep in channel or furrow, earth or air
Pillowed upon a slogan or a prayer
And dark be swift and day be swift and sure.

ELIZABETH TRAVERS.

Pen and ink sketch, by Philip Reisman.

Marse Brown

A POEM FOR THE UNION

You're on the far side of the grave now, Dred
(you've been dead a year), but you're freer
than I am—and I'm white and still living.
I won't be living long, though, friend,
and I'll end as black in the face as you:
they're going to hang me high in an hour.
I draw my last breath where you drew your first,
and I rejoice because, if given my choice,
my place of death would be your place of birth:
Virginia.

I could've lived to be older than fifty-nine;
I could've lasted out this outcast century:
I had the frame for it, but not the frame of mind.
If I'd been blind to you and deaf to God,
if I'd loved myself more and money most,
if I'd kept my nose clean and my soul snotty,
if I'd valued my skin, if I'd thrown no stones
at the sin of slavery, if I'd passed the buck
and left such things as bravery and broken bones
for fools (in short, if I'd been a sleeping dog),
they'd have let me lie till the nineteen-hundreds.

I die sooner, but with nothing done that I'd undo
if my life were spared: the slavers slain
on the Pottawatomie would be slain again,
all five, and more if found; the battle once
won at Black Jack Oaks would be twice won;
the raids made on Sugar Creek and the fight
lost on the Marais des Cygnes would be made
and lost in the future as they were in the past;
the same slaves would be taken by force
from Messrs. Hicklin, Larue, and Cruise,
of Missoura,
and Cruise would be shot dead a second time
if he cocked his Colt in his second life;
and lastly, the same treason would be committed
at Harper's Ferry, and when brought to book,
I'd give you the same reason that I gave in
Kansas:
nits grow to be lice!

Knowing that delay would merely change
the number of the day and the name of the month,
knowing that at some later date, as the same
traitor, I'd dance on air for the same crimes,
I say, let them crack my spine now and here.
Commend me to your only Master, Dred, and mine.

JOHN SANFORD.

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New Poet to Old

(*on reading Robert Frost*)

He seems to shun
This age when things are done,
When from wounds of time
Blood has run.
His life is one long thinking afternoon,
Taking notes on sun and moon.

He seeks a prophecy
In rare moth's wings;
And, finding dust in pockets,
Writes lines on the millennium.

His is a search for specific:
The precise trill of whippoorwill,
The undercurrent of now and still;
A symbol in a microscopic speck;
All things brief as a spent breath.

A grandfather in a twilight pose,
His mind with simplicity shows
The utter good of evening,
The still excursion under stars,
After days which as dried leaves are burning.

In these things he has a part:
The smell of death between hunter and gun,
Outracing a deer in the winter sun;
The quality of heart
Between neighbors;
The zealousness of worms
At undermining earth;
The strength of hair and grass
As silently they grow in graves.

But what are epitaphs
Or delight of secret country paths
When an age has an engineering eye,
And vision leaps as with the span of bridges.
We are still in thrall
With beasts and angels,

And in a crimsoned world of combat
Come forward in a cleansing wave.
The future is cupped in our bringing palms;
With infinite love we have steeled our arms.

Old poet,
The thrush is not supreme;
And harking and halting on tiptoe
Drowns in a midnight dream.

Out of the blunt hunger of thunder,
The dark eruption of guns;
Hear the flute call of morning
Growing like veins of body
Over the grandeur of land;
Soon we will cease and still the storming,
And come out of our hard house
To stand for history in heroic story;
Cool and free with building hands.

And will you, old poet,
Lover of landscape,
Whittler of word,
Wander through our firmament
Still looking for your bird?

DORIS BAUMAN.

Edith Glaser.

The German

Fearless on a day of wind
the child of the free peasant
sings in the winter forest.

Suddenly bare of snow
the German soldier leans
on the tree as though alive:

the museum of natural history
saved the insignia, the boots
on their eastward stride, the
tunic as winding-sheet.

(He came in the white year.
He talked under the dangerous trees.
He took the next to the last step.

The Russians passed him
in the western direction.)

Of the complex metals
Of the tables of organization
Of the dream-like maps
the unmelted gunman remains
in the year of the child.

The grandfather will tell him what
is in the forest. . . .
of the glacier: of the pits
in the terrain of the heart:

of the fathers who endured the
ice age: of their colder will:

of the numbness upon the enemy,
the flight to the polar cap.

He saw in the forest the edge
of the tide, a mauled particle
thrown up by that weather.

DON GORDON.

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The Jewish Writer's Dilemma

By Nathan Ausubel

ONE hundred and twenty years ago a sensitive poet of genius, when he realized the disabling reality of his Jewishness, submitted himself for the sake of a career to the mumbo-jumbo of religious conversion. But tormented by an uneasy conscience he tried to laugh it off with an epigram: "Judaism is not a religion; it is a misfortune." Heinrich Heine's bitter quip can apply today with even greater truth to the bare biologic fact of being born a Jew, for that, unlike religion, is not something accommodatingly open to revision.

The casting off by an individual of his national identity when it becomes a liability is a pattern of conduct familiar in Jewish history, just as it is in the histories of other peoples. After Alexander the Great began the Hellenization of the peoples of Western Asia there emerged certain well-known types of Jewish intellectuals under the cultural aegis of the conqueror. Some became Hellenists by choice because their eager minds were charmed by the manifestly superior civilization of the Greeks. But there were others who were painfully self-conscious of the social and economic disabilities that bound them. So they "de-Judaized" themselves as rapidly as possible out of practical expediency. Three centuries later, when the Greek Empire was displaced by the Roman these "Hellenists" with chameleon adaptability transformed themselves into ardent "Romans." As in the instance of the renegade Josephus Flavius, they allowed themselves to be used by the master-race of antiquity for its own imperialist ends: to keep the rebellious Jewish people suppressed.

Thirteen centuries later, under the harassment of the Holy Inquisition in Spain and Portugal, the spiritual descendant of this "realist," the *Morrano*, embraced the golden doctrine of safety —that discretion is the better part of valor. While the great majority of Jews preserved their identity, and for that were condemned to become homeless wanderers, he was not at all dismayed by his sacrifice of integrity for the sake of "belonging" and chose conversion. But his adjustment did not help him any for, always suspected of the "Judaizing heresy," he was even more ruthlessly persecuted by the Church than the Jew who did not surrender.

Perhaps the most dismal experience of all was that of certain Jewish intellectuals in Germany. Ever since Moses Mendelssohn initiated among Jews the Enlightenment Movement during the second half of the eighteenth century, assimilation served as much as an instrument for "getting on" as for fulfillment of the genuine hunger for western culture. Many Jews became distinguished writers, scientists, musicians and scholars. They represented the intellectual salt of the earth: men like Heine, Borne, Karl Marx, Felix Mendelssohn, Ehrlich, Wassermann, Toller and Einstein. But there were also others whose success and seeming acceptance as equals by the Germans filled them with parvenu self-esteem. They strutted before the *Polnische und Russische Juden* and despised them openly. "No wonder there are anti-Semites!" they would rage as they looked upon their humble, poverty-stricken, Yiddish-speaking fellow Jews from Eastern Europe. They were determined that there could be no peace between them so long as Gentiles associated them in the same ethnic group. Then along came the Nazis and brutally insisted that they were no Germans at all but just ordinary *verfluchte Juden!* Finally, the most convincing arguments that *they* were Jews was furnished them by the crematoria of Herr Himmler which, with exemplary impartiality, consumed them as well as East European Jews.

TODAY, more than at any other time in our history, the American Jewish writer stands face to face with his dilemma of clear-cut identity, with the necessity of reconciling his supposedly conflicting loyalties as Jew and as American. Furthermore, he has to make up his mind whether he is going to write about Jewish life or ignore it altogether. To make this decision is by no means an easy matter, for the questions he has to answer for himself are bewildering in number and complexity. Usually he examines this dangerously mined liter-

★ ★ ★

To Festus Coleman in Prison

Festus Coleman, caged from your fields of desire,
more guilty of wing rides the gull, more guilty of hope
the grain rises, and setting the forest afire
with his freedom, less innocent runs the antelope
than you who, being black, are blamed.

Not Festus,
not Festus Coleman, flung to a shadowy cage,
clutching the bars of shame, cries out for justice.
At the great guilt-dripping sun we roar our rage.

Only the blind man, dreaming himself a gull,
tries laughter; only the blind takes pleasure of stars. . .
What shadow shrouds the portrait of grain on my wall?
Can there be bars in each window? San Quentin bars?
Free! set us free! we roar at the judge-faced sun;
free! set us free for the forest where antelopes run!

AARON KRAMER.

Festus Coleman is a thirty-one-year-old California Negro who was imprisoned three and a half years ago on a sensational charge, played up in the Hearst press, of robbery and rape. His trial lasted one day and he could not even get a competent lawyer. Progressive forces in California are demanding a retrial.

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ary terrain with a cautious eye and resolves, although a little guiltily, to give it a wide berth.

Because he is a thoughtful person, the Jewish writer is disturbed by the inconsistencies in his brief of self-justification. He is even haunted by the fear of self-betrayal and of disloyalty to the people he springs from. For today he is literally in a state of mental shock, sharing with all other Jews a shattering grief. The events of the past several years have ripped into his consciousness with the brutal realization of what it means just having been born a Jew in a reactionary society. Tremblica, Maidanek, Dachau and Oswiecim—their ghoulish horrors have left him limp, icy cold and scared—yes, scared. . . . While our native fascists—the Coughlins, the Smiths, the Rankins and the McCormicks—have failed to stir him out of his cosy apathy with their Jew-baiting, the German incinerators and soap factories, fed by the countless corpses of murdered Jews, have convinced him with iron logic.

Certainly there are Jewish writers with cold intestines. They cobble with nimble words and ersatz ideas and avoid the palpitating stuff of life itself which calls for a feeling heart and honest thinking. They don't have to face the perplexities of identity nor the compulsions of conviction. Their principal preoccupation is that of the tradesman—with the literary market.

But the honest Jewish writer, and he is the rule rather than the exception, feels a natural urge to articulate his sense of group hurt and indignation against the persecutors of the Jewish people. Instinctively he would wish to identify himself in some positive way with his fellow Jews. Their terrible sorrows stir the uneasy conscience in him to cry out or to join in some succoring action on their behalf. He would like to refute with the truth the conscienceless traducers of the Jews, would like to explain, to reveal and vindicate his people to all thoughtful, decent Gentiles. Frequently this impulse leads him to take a public stand in concert with other Jews or to write seriously about them and their problems in novels, short stories, essays and poems. But sometimes something strange and curious seems to hold him back. The Dialectical Doctor of Anatole France's satire reaches out to him a subtle restraining hand and rationalizes away for him this moral imperative with the most persuasive sophistries. Soon timorous shame constrains him from identifying himself openly with the despised Jews, leaving him haunted by psychoneurotic fears and guilt feelings.

Let there be no mistake about this—his feeling of guilt is honest, is real! Sometimes it poisons his existence for, in most cases, he is a sensitive, good man. If he has a bourgeois origin, as is frequently the case, he recoils from the crass materialism and vulgarity quite often met with in certain sections of his class. When loathing overcomes him he very often loses his balance of judgment. He somehow forgets that the obscene face of the parvenu or moneygrubber is *not* a Jewish face at all, as the Jew-baiters would wish him to believe, but a phenomenon encountered universally among all nationalities, whether English, Irish, German or Italian.

The question then arises: how is it that he never seems emotionally distressed by the spectacle of Gentile *nouveau riche* vulgarity? Might it be that he regards the Jewish moneygrubber as a reflection on himself as a Jew, and, therefore, he hates him for having a common racial origin? Conceivably, by hating him he becomes psychologically disassociated from him. Then again, it may be that he has listened far too attentively to the slanders of the Jew-baiters and has absorbed their poison unconsciously. Thus the devious route of the defense mechanism may lead him to the acceptance of the vicious anti-Semitic caricature of the Jewish *allright-nik*, not only as a true portrait, but as a portrait of all middle-class Jews—in fact of *all* Jews! . . . Worse yet, it leads him to overlook the fact that the vast majority of Jews are either workers or poor shopkeepers, that they are usually productive and decent, with an innate refinement and a love for the civilized values that baffles only those who are insufficiently acquainted with Jewish life, culture and character. And because of this distorted view many a Jewish writer studiously avoids portraying Jews.

On the other hand, there are quite a number of Jewish writers who have had a workingclass or petty storekeeper background. Some were brought to the United States by immigrant parents; others were born on the East Side or in similar slum rookeries. Their impressionable, formative years were scarred by poverty and wretchedness. And so they grew up bruised by the ugliness that engulfed them, deprived of either physical or emotional security in the world. As they matured and were able to retrospect critically about their childhood they associated with it everything hateful and soul-destroying. Their life in the slums represented to them the sum total of Jewish life, for it was the only kind they knew, and their loathing stood between them and a just evaluation of it. Thus hating it, they refused to write about it.

Perhaps these writers forget that the law of unity of opposites works inescapably in Jewish slum life as it does everywhere else. Gorky discovered it movingly in Czarist Russian slum life, Pio Baroja in the Spanish, Andersen-Nexo in the Danish. What a libel it is on the life of the Jewish worker and slum dweller to take from him the will to nobility! True enough, an evil environment warps the mind and disfigures the character but it also, by contrast, points the way to truer values. Many a dream of beauty, many an awakening to the need for a more just society took place amidst the East Side's sunless caverns, inspired by the compassion and mutual aid practiced among the Jewish poor, by the love of learning and progress so traditional in Jewish life.

No one but a fool or a philistine would claim that it is easy to be utterly honest with oneself. No one but a self-righteous prig will condemn Jewish writers for not identifying themselves more closely with Jewish life. In this they are no different from many other Jews although, by the very nature of things, writers have a greater social responsibility. They deal with human problems and ideas. Therefore, they are intrinsically teachers and, whether intentionally or not, they serve for many as guides along confusing roads.

Since the Jewish writer does not live in a self-enclosed universe it stands to reason that what disturbs and motivates the Jews of his social milieu also affects him. Consequently, when he disidentifies himself from his Jewishness, whether in terms of his own life or of his writing, it is merely an indication that there are many other Jews, particularly among the educated, who are intent on doing the same thing for precisely the same honest, or confused, or opportunistic reasons. The writer is no unfeeling automaton. He is, as Georg Brandes observed about Shakespeare, "not thirty-six plays and a few poems jumbled together, but a man who felt and thought, rejoiced and suffered, brooded, dreamed and created."

To be sure, there are also "practical" reasons why so many Jewish writers deliberately avoid writing about Jewish life. There is a cynical tradition abroad, in the book and magazine trades, in the Hollywood editorial rooms and in Broadway theatrical circles, that Jew-

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Courtesy ACA Gallery.

"Miner," etching by Philip Evergood.

ish themes and characters, with rare exceptions, are unprofitable, simply not box-office, unless they are comical and quaint, speaking a dislocated English with an *oy-oy* accent in the manner of *Potash and Perlmutter* and *Abe Kabbible*. These enjoy a huge success because anti-Semites, of all shades and intensities, like to laugh at Jews, and there are, oddly enough, some Jews who, prompted by a perverse masochistic impulse, enjoy laughing at themselves.

Let us not try to deny it: in our world of competitive catch-as-catch-can, with such leaden impedimenta as the bills of the landlord, the butcher and the grocer to bear him down, the average Jewish writer feels his material insecurity acutely. He has no stomach for writing vulgarizations of Jewish life: those Jazz-Singer tear-jerkers, the Mendel Marantz quaint wisdom gags, the Hymie Kaplan dialect comicalities. On the other hand, he sometimes regards serious writing about Jewish life as a financial and literary risk. Rightly or wrongly, he believes he would thus be addressing himself to a limited number of readers. And so perhaps it is not at all unnatural that he should wish to graze in greener literary pastures.

Many a thoughtful Jewish writer has sincerely reached the conclusion that Jewish life is too circumscribed, too prosaic, too parochial—as it were—to rewardingly serve his talents. Very earnestly he will tell you that he must go in search of more "universal" material. "Do you want me to go back to the Ghetto?" he will ask with exasperation. To his way of thinking Jews do not comprise a characteristic segment of the American people. Therefore, to write about them means to write not about "universal" America but about a unique and thus far unassimilated minority group. No—he will not write about Jews simply as a matter of *principle!* Try to suggest gently to him that he is unconsciously a "Jewish anti-Semite" and he bristles with indignation.

Since these writers do not think Jewish life is of "universal" interest nor that Jews are representative of the American people ("real American!"), let us then briefly inquire what kind of life and people they do regard as bona fide American and sufficiently interesting for literary copy. Somehow, without any preliminary, interior struggling, they write about the Pennsylvania Dutch, Southern plantation owners, Kentucky mountaineers, Boston Brahmins, Indians on the Reservations, Slovak miners, and the Home on the Range.

There is nothing capricious or feigned in the alarm of certain Jewish writers about returning to a spiritual Ghetto. They have long been smarting under Gentile criticism of Jewish isolationism and clannishness, practices which, he frequently fails to recognize, have been forced on Jews against their will by the most unrelenting social, economic and cultural anti-Semitism. He associates the tragic fate of the Jew in the past with a narrow group existence crippled and warped by persecution and perpetual rootlessnes. And so he very consciously strains to throw it off in exchange for what he believes is the truer, the larger, the finer, the more complete identity.

"This is not a nation," wrote Walt Whitman about America, "but a teeming nation of nations." To speak of a unified American culture is therefore arrant nonsense. Our country has a multicultural heritage. Unity in variety is its striking characteristic. This is what makes its civilization so rich, so colorful, so vital. Each ethnic or national group makes its own unique contributions to the total life of our people. If the Negroes have contributed their spirituals, blues and jazz to the music of America can one justifiably argue that they are less *American* for that? Because Rollvaag, a Norwegian immigrant, wrote his *Giants of the Earth* in his native tongue, does it diminish any of its value as the most admired novel of Midwestern pioneer-life in *American* literature? Who, for instance, would be justified whether from a cultural or moral viewpoint to call upon Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen and Richard Wright to stop writing about Negro life and problems on the grounds that it is not "American" nor "universal"?

It is conceivable then that such fine Jewish writers as Albert Maltz, Lillian Hellman and Leonard Ehrlich could remain American writers with a "universal" appeal if they *also* wrote on Jewish themes as well as on any others that they chose. All who live, toil, suffer and strive in America are Americans, including Jews. All that aspires after truth and possesses humanity is "universal." In short, *all* culture is culture. Jewish and otherwise. It is as varied as mankind, as infinite as life itself.

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The Tower

By Aaron Kramer

I am sick after steadfastness
Watching the world cataractlike
Pour screaming onto steep ruins . . .
If anywhere . . .
Were a tower with foundations,
or a treasure-chamber
With a firm vault, or a walled
fortress
That stood on the years, not stag-
gering, not moving. . . .

—from "The Tower Beyond Tragedy," by Robinson Jeffers.

. . . this pragmatical, preposterous
pig of a world,
its farrow that so solid seem,
Must vanish on the instant if the
mind but change its theme:
. . . In mockery I have set
A powerful emblem up,
And sing it rhyme upon rhyme
In mockery of a time
Half-dead at the top. . . .

—from "Blood and the Moon," by W. B. Yeats.

IT IS a literary phenomenon of our time that so many readers and poets hold in reverent awe the Tower symbol. Building at a distance of 6,000 miles, from differently metamorphosed rock, and working with dissimilar blueprints, William Butler Yeats and Robinson Jeffers must be recognized as the wizard twin-architects. A hermit outpost beyond time, expelling all signs of humanity from the nearby landscape, high overlooking this planet with its swarming things, their tower is supposed to grant view of truth smiling up from the s ence of stone, staring down from the calm, wise moon.

That such an odd piece of real estate should find popularity is due to more factors than the poets' advertising skill. Conditions that stir writers exist for others as well; Jeffers and Yeats struck a responsive chord because they felt the "mist and snow" sharply enough to run away, screaming that the old shelters leak. When they bugled triumphantly from afar, describing the soundness and majesty of their new shelter, was it not natural that others should follow, hoping to find some comfort from the storm? For unquestionably the old house was rent. Anyone with eyes could see, before the new century had gone far, that all the remodelling—new coats of paint, heating system, rugs, sofas and chandeliers—could not stop the "mist and snow"; everything shook in that old hodge-podge temple of Greek, Gothic, Victorian and Romanesque design. In Darwin's day religion had temporarily patched the roof: Man is intended for the pinnacle of God's planning genius: knowledge-thirsty, ingenious, energetic—just wait and see—the long agony would soon be justified: weren't we about ready to roll up our sleeves and drag out the sun? . . . But here it was, Miracle Age already, planes in the sky, trains and bridges, cable and telephone wire; yet things were all still the same—only worse. Where could one turn: hating the shiny exultation of iron and steel and billionaire, hating the desperate bludgeonings of religion (furious at being worn through), seeing oneself and all life as in a huge mirror: laughable, contemptible pygmies strutting between geologic ages on a "splinter" called Earth?

Though there was a real need for shelter among thinking people, these poets created their tower not out of compassion, but for self. Jeffers, having speedily read all the books and ploughed through the university, was terrified by the prospect of setting up house among the crowd of Mankind. "I have outgrown the city a little . . ." and so he built on the desolate Pacific shore a house, where he could play at God with his "puppets" undisturbed. Yet what actually bothered him into writing the epics we know?

It had occurred to me that I was
already a year older
than Keats when he died, and I
too had written many verses,
but they
were all worthless. . . .

At that moment, his confession goes on, he forgot that "life's value is life," determining that he must *accomplish* something huge and original, to bring his name prominence and endurance (back there in the cities he'd outgrown). The admission of Yeats is similar: describing walks as a youth through the streets, when he could strike a "Byronic pose" and watch his reflection admiringly in store windows. As much as anything else, it was this assurance of inner superiority over the "common man," this urge to be a Byron, a Keats, anything but a nobody on the street, which drove these men to come away from civilization and "stare gigantically down."

GOING to their poetry we find, despite the fierce element of agony which lends dramatic strength (as per recipe), passage after passage of ecstatic joy in the warm, high safety of their dwelling. Yeats squeezes his lemon of sour pleasure by posing as a martyr to the cause of impartial, truthful vision: ambition has not been allowed to stain his honor: he sees all, and that all is nothing: "What had the Caesars but their thrones?" Yeats, at least, has a "sweetness" (never clearly defined). "Bound neither to Cause nor to State" he is proud of total independence—a God-head, creating his own soul, triumphing against bodily ruin, joyously drunk atop his tower "from the whole wine" even the intangible "fume of muscatel" which the mere living kind down on earth cannot taste; knowing in pure moonlight "the abstract joy/ The half-read wisdom of daemonic images"; comforting himself with the thought that Swift, Berkeley, Goldsmith and Burke had gone up the same "winding stair," and that he may "dine at journey's end/ With Landor and with Donne."

Jeffers likewise tells us that he is a martyred devotee of Truth:

Dear is the truth. Life is grown
sweeter and lonelier. . . .
A stone is a better pillow than
many visions. . . .
Though joy is better than sorrow,
joy is not great. . . .
I bruised myself in the flint mortar
and burnt me
In the red shell, I tortured myself,
I flew forth,
Stood naked of myself and broke
me in fragments. . . .

Yet he, too, admits, and with a more dazzling honesty than Yeats, how basic to his work is the motive of personal comfort:

I said in my heart,
"Better invent than suffer:

RIGHT: "Deliver Us from Evil," lithograph by John Wilson, runner-up for Art Young Memorial Cartoon Award (announced Dec. 19, 1944).

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Pen and ink sketch, by Nicolai Cikovsky.

imagine victims
Lest your own flesh be chosen the agonist, or you
Martyr some creature to the beauty of the place." And I said
"Burn sacrifices once a year to magic
Horror away from the house, this little house here. . . ."

Even in time of war, instead of allowing the agony of "ten million lives . . . stolen" to intrude, he proudly confesses that peace lives within him, and cannot be touched—safeguarded by the knowledge that "wars die out, life will die out, death cease." He has no connection with those millions:

I have cut the meshes
And fly like a freed falcon . . . how can I express the excellence I have found, that has no color but clearness;
No honey but ecstasy; . . . no desire but fulfilled; no passion but peace,
The pure flame and the white, fierier than any passion; no time but spheral eternity . . .
I am quieter inside than even the ocean or the stars . . . I was thinking last night, that people all over the world
Are doing much worse and suffering much more than we
This wartime . . .
I'd rather be what I am,
Feeling this peace and joy, the fire's joy's burning,
And I have my peace. . . . Can you feel how happy I am but how far off too?

Thus, for the poets themselves, the Tower was clearly a logical goal, and, once inside, a beneficial place to stay. But how much shelter, what kind of shelter, can such a symbol afford the reader?

It rouses us to despise present evil: through general mockery, and exposure of human minds at work, we come to recognize the "Leader of the Crowd" as a demagogue, war statesmen as blunderers, the public often blinded, the poor made vile and dream-foolish by wretched conditions. So sensitive at last to beastliness, we begin to know it in ourselves, and, emulating the strict morality of these poets in their search for bare truth, we lift our own minds from vanity, false ambition, narrow prejudice, hatreds and carefully nurtured faiths, giving up the close perspective in our everyday lives until events lose their pompously bloated shadows and terrible size. After a while some of the Cassandra and Crazy Jane enters us. Our eyes function in a new way: we read universal meanings, understand motivations, grow familiar with the roots of things and their ultimate end, and triumphantly call the cards of prophecy. Crime no longer is too enormous for our concept: neurotically we stand awake at night while the city sleeps, knowing whatever suffers. This element of negative universality assists the power of Yeats' and Jeffers' poetry, not only by providing a set of life-long symbols to which their art can be anchored. Hints of larger meanings and deeper denials radiate from the lines. Artists who sponsor positive programs are susceptible to flaws, challenges, and changing conditions; but it is very difficult to break down a gigantic denial such as theirs. That human life is puny and full of ugliness in comparison with the universe—that silence will replace the noise of civilizations eventually—we readily agree. And especially voiced in such magnificent language, such overwhelming artistry as Yeats and Jeffers employ, denial becomes a statement armored and powerful indeed. The strength itself is sufficient to leave most readers bowed in reverent awe—while the poetic beauty serves as adequate shelter to aesthetes.

But this "universal" view, this "objectivity" of which they are both so proud, leads from danger to danger, from stair to winding stair, until their eyes are miles above ground, closer to the stars than to our "dime's worth" planet.

Yeats, painfully near-sighted, searched too hard for Truth—what he finally clutched was a twisted, disgustingly false perspective. We see a strange, grey, upside-down earth through his eyes. Berkeley taught him that Mind fathers everything—we are therefore magicians, if we so desire, able to destroy the "pied beauty" of Nature, able to follow the wild swans in their flight from earth, able to create our own universe and people. Readers will search in vain through Yeats' poetry for a single man or woman whom we can recognize. Red Hanrahan, Michael Robartes, Crazy Jane and the Bishop, the Man and Woman Young and Old, are all synthetic creations of Yeats' mind, conveniently saying and doing whatever he directs them to. Peopled thus, how can "love" or "hate" in his poems be anything warmer than words? His development shows more and more of mystical "wisdom," less and less of life. Even for that short period around 1916, when the Easter Rebellion momentarily tore him down to earth, Yeats was careful to remain "objective," describing a political prisoner as "blind and leader of the blind, drinking the foul ditch where they lie. . . ." Afterwards he actually apologized for having been almost drawn away from the Tower:

"Vengeance for Jacques Molay."
In cloud-pale rags, or in lace,
The rage-driven, rage-tormented, and rage-hungry troop,
Trooper belaboring trooper, biting at arm or at face,
Plunges towards nothing, arms and fingers spreading wide
For the embrace of nothing; and I, my wits astray
Because of all that senseless tumult, all but cried
For vengeance on the murderers of Jacques Molay. . . .

refusing to see right from wrong, sneering at the martyrs and dreamers:

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O but we dreamed to mend
Whatever mischief seemed
To afflict mankind, but now . . .
Learn that we were crack-pated
when we dreamed.

From this level of horrible impartiality the winding stair led him ever higher: "We traffic in mockery"—he chuckled; even the great, the wise, and the good fell under his axe. Another turn of the stair—and he became partisan indeed: beauty, love, life, the sun, were now enemies to be denied or attacked. Life was described as a burden, a senseless, unrewarding burden, in poem after poem; or a frenzied dance of "weasels" ready to devour one another. He identified himself with darkness, night, death: "I have mummy truths to tell/ Whereat the living mock. . . ." One more turn; the pinnacle of the tower is achieved; youth and age, wisdom and ignorance, life and death, are all one, all nothing: his tombstone is ready:

Cast a cold eye
On life, on death;
Horseman, pass by.

Jeffers has not as yet climbed this high. Nature is still worth mentioning for its own sake—not only to be used for symbolizing. But there is already sufficient untruth and half-truth in his vision of humanity and human history. Cassandra, tracing the past and foreseeing the future, completely twists what has happened and what can be expected. Her examples are all on the bad side of the ledger: man's white palaces, insubstantial hiding-places of corruption, can't be regarded as noble —nor may the great bridges and tunnels receive a word of praise. Everything positive must be rejected, since it can be counterbalanced and replaced by a negative. The negative is sought after in every poem almost, stressed over and over, with nothing to rise from it but the assertion that Mr. Jeffers himself is climbing to ever-greater mastery and awareness: what matters it that the rest of us are on our way "down the mountain"? Jeffers is not sorry for us. He conceives our cities as filled with a bliss based on false pride and self-love. Here is his vision of us:

all that we did or dreamed of
Regarded each other, the man
pursued the woman, the woman
clung to the man, warriors and
kings
Strained at each other in the dark-
ness, all loved or fought inward,
each one of the lost people
Sought the eyes of another that
another should praise him:
sought never his own but an-
other's; the net of desire
Had every nerve drawn to the cen-
ter, so that they writhed like a
full draught of fishes, all matted
In the one mesh. . . .

Where does this misdirected indictment lead Jeffers? It leads him to overlook completely the greatness that humanity again and again produces; the majestic and inspired creations of our artists (including himself); the struggles against those forces binding us in a Net; the heroes, martyrs, and sages of all lands and times who were brave enough to stay and fight it out, rather than cut a little hole in the Net and escape to personal triumph. . . . Instead of these he creates misshapen puppets, resembling all kinds of beasts, murdering one another, committing incest or sodomy, perverted, ugly, and self-satisfied. This is the impartial perspective of "universality" that Robinson Jeffers has reached.

What shelter can we find in these Towers? Shall we, the seeing, escape and set up hermitages on the seashores while civilization is left to the hawks and weasels? The poets did not care about us—ran away, in fact—but we have come to try out their shelter, and our questions are valid. If there will be nothing but silence and death—why all these poems? Doesn't it become silly for men to say *"nothing! nothing! nothing!"* prolifically year after year?

Ah, the Tower, the magnetic Tower! Why do we stand so foolishly battering at the gate? We have trudged in vain; none of us are desired. Let us go back to the city where Sandburg and Whitman wait, with fine blueprints made specially for us.

"D-Day," oil by Arnold Hoffman, at ACA Gallery through August 3.

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Men and Machines

By Dorothy Brewster

In my neighborhood movie house once I saw a "short" in a series entitled "Men Who Have Changed the World." The man in this one was Hargreaves, inventor about 1768 of the spinning jenny. One man begins to spin as much yarn as eight, his fellow weavers in the village are thrown out of employment, he goes to London to confer with businessmen, who take his idea and do him out of his reward; and as machinery more and more replaces hand-weaving, the starving weavers burn Hargreaves' house and destroy his machines. Then in a series of striking shots of vast textile mills, steel mills, munitions factories going full blast, followed by other shots of vast stoppages and depressions, the film raises the question: Was Hargreaves a benefactor or an enemy of mankind? I amused myself as I watched the picture with the fancy—what would a young citizen of the USSR think about it? Certainly at the point where Hargreaves is taken in hand by the clever entrepreneurs in London, the Soviet citizen would make a deduction that to him would seem obvious: this new invention would indeed benefit everybody, if not monopolized for profit by the few in control of production. At the time I saw the film, a short-wave commentator known as Ivan the Terrible was breaking in on German broadcasts with very pertinent remarks. What would have happened had Ivan the Terrible thrust his comments into this movie sequence? Probably a Congressional investigation of Hollywood.

The fear of the Machine, the threat of the Machine Man, is a major theme in the literature of our time. Groping for an understanding of all that the Machine Age signifies in terms of human welfare, many of our playwrights and novelists here and in Europe have taken one side or the other of the curse-or-blessing debate. During World War I, two Frenchmen wrote war books: Barbusse, *Under Fire*, and Duhamel, *Civilization*. Both were winners of a *Prix de Goncourt*. Both give us moving portraits of the individual *poilu* and powerful scenes of battlefield and hospital. Duhamel is dominated by the idea that man has created in the Machine a monster that will destroy him. His concluding chapter describes the first great repair depot which the wounded enter on coming away from the front. "Here are brought the parts of the military machine that are most spoiled. Skilled workmen take them in hand at once, loosen them quickly, and with a practiced eye examine them. . . . If the part is seriously damaged, it goes through the usual routine of being scrapped. But if the human material is not irretrievably ruined, it is patched up ready to be used again at the first opportunity, and that is called preserving the effective." He pictures the operating hut, the monster sterilizer, the operating table, the masked and rubber-gloved operators, the stretchers gliding in between the tables like canoes in an archipelago, the little Madagascar Negro attendants moving about in a sort of austere ballet—and all this to an obbligato of booming guns and vibrating motors. "Nothing less than this complex organism would suffice to reduce by the smallest degree the immense evil creation of the Machine Age." He goes out into the night air for a moment and succumbs to a feeling of helplessness in the face of "civilization." "True civilization exists in the harmony of a choir chanting, in the marble statue on the burnt hillside, in the words two thousand years old of the Man who said; Love one another. It is not in the monstrous sterilizer, in the surgeon's shining forceps; if it is not in the hearts of men, then it is nowhere." The *hearts of men;* what about their minds? Duhamel, full of insight as his individual portraits are, does not, when he leaves the individual, show us the thinking group; it is the mass driven to the slaughter that he sees.

Barbusse, equally discerning in his individual portraits, never for long loses sight of the group—disagreeing, arguing, fumbling towards an understanding of their predicament, sharing, despairing, and dreaming. He recognizes the terrible compulsions of that civilization which Duhamel rejects. ("I hate the twentieth century as I hate this degenerate Europe, as I hate the world which Europe has polluted," says Duhamel.) But Barbusse does not reject; he seeks behind the fact of war—of "one great army committing suicide" —for the causes, and at no point does the concept of the inhuman Machine emerge as his controlling obsession. It is always men, not machines that he emphasizes. A division of Moroccan soldiers passes, a group of French *poilus*, who discuss the characteristics of these Africans: their ferocity, their passion to be in with the bayonet, their efficiency as fighting machines. "They're real soldiers," says one; but another answers proudly, "We are not soldiers—we are men." Barbusse, becoming clearer and clearer in his thinking as he lived and fought on, was led to believe in the eventual control of the Machine through a revolutionary change in the social and economic system. He burned himself up in the struggle for a better social order, and as you will remember, died while on a visit to Moscow in 1935 and is buried there. Duhamel, the "machine-battler," in Ehrenburg's phrase, became the pessimistic chronicler of the decay of his class and its institutions, a decay which he, like so many other writers of the past twenty years, tends to mistake for the decay and defeat of the human race.

The very titles of the sections of John Dos Passos' *Three Soldiers* place him with Duhamel rather than Barbusse in the treatment of the war theme: "Making the Mould"; "The Metal Cools"; "Machines"; "Rust"; "The World Outside"; "Under the Wheels." His John Andrews falls under the wheels of the machine, he is a "toad hopping across a road in front of a steam roller." This young musician, a deserter in France after the Armistice, thinks of the Renaissance, of the great wind of freedom that had blown out of Italy. "In contrast the world today seemed pitifully arid. Men seemed to have shrunk in stature before the vastness of the mechanical contrivances they had invented. Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Aretino, Cellini: would the strong figures of men ever so dominate the world again? Today everything was congestion, the scurrying of crowds; men had become antlike. Perhaps it was inevitable that the crowds should sink deeper and deeper into slavery. Whichever won, tyranny from above, or spontaneous organization from below, there could be no individuals."

From "no individuals" to the mechanized man is the step dramatized in the clever and melodramatic *RUR*, by Karel Capek, which established a new word in the language—"robot." The robots, invented to fight and work for the rulers of the world, turn upon their makers and all but destroy them.

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The play raises the question—for profits, for progress, have we destroyed mankind? It leaves us with the nightmarish vision of "a hundred thousand faces all alike, facing this way."

Less melodramatic, more mystical, are the two best-known plays of Ernst Toller, *Machine-Breakers* and *Man and the Mass*. In the first, the starving weavers of 1812 England, like the neighbors of Hargreaves, turn upon the machine, seeing how its mechanizing processes are making them less than men:

> *Charles, you shall be the Foot, to tread your life away.*
> *George, you shall be the Hand, to tie and knot and fasten. . . .*

The violent leader wins, the pacifist is defeated and killed, the machinery is broken, and the rulers are pleased that they have an excuse for ruthless repression. I once saw the play produced in a little working-class theater in Vienna in 1923. The production was as starved as the city itself, but there was a deep emotional response from an audience that saw in the scarecrow children of the English weavers their own starving children. Were those Viennese workers influenced by the pacifist message of the play to that patience, that "too-peace-offering unsinister organization," that made them the victims of February 1934? The final scene of the play is spectacular: "Factory by moonlight with a gigantic steam engine and mechanical looms, at which children and a few women are seated. . . . Amid the sounds of machinery are heard the hum of transmitters, the clear tone of the running crank-shafts, the deep rumble of the levers, and the regular whirr and rattle of the shutters." The Engineer, failing to hold back the mob, goes insane, standing up on a bridge above the ruins of his temple, and proclaiming that the Engine still lives and reaches out a claw to clutch the hearts of men.

In *Massemensch* Toller's message is even clearer. Ludwig Lewisohn, writing in 1924 after the Theatre Guild production, phrased that message in all its hopeless contradiction: Toller, he says, sees the hopelessness of mankind's struggle, arising from the fact that if you use force, you incur guilt, and if you do not use force, you are destroyed by those who use it. This is the most dramatic of all ideas, he continues, the "most catastrophic for the entire race." The Woman goes to her death in the play rather than be liberated by force. "Under capitalism there is a lean and shriveled possibility for the individual mind. The masses wish to obliterate the individual. Salvation cannot lie that way. Only personality is saving." (But saving for what, one wonders, and where?)

ELMER RICE in his *Adding Machine* presented us with his own robot in Mr. Zero, whose brief brainstorm of rebellion against his machine life—when he kills his boss with the bill-file—lands him in the Elysian Fields, where he is made the target for some very bitter remarks about the human race. "You weren't so bad as a monkey," says Lieutenant Charles, "but even in those days there must have been some bigger and brainier monkey that you kow-towed to. The mark of the slave was on you from the start. . . . You're a failure, Zero. A waste product. A slave to a contraption of steel and iron. The animal's instincts, but not his strength and skill. The animal's appetites, but not his unashamed indulgence of them. . . . Time's up—back you go to your sunless groove—the raw material of slums and wars—the ready prey of the first jingo or demagogue or political adventurer who takes the trouble to play upon your ignorance and credulity and provincialism—you poor spineless brainless boob."

This picture of the masses, you will say, is in the spirit of the 1920's. But the Machine, and the robot continue to exercise their fascination on into the 1930's. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* pictures a grisly Utopia where science, with its offspring the Machine, has created a mechanical world and mechanical men, who respond *en masse* to calculated stimuli. The last of Huxley's illusions, science as a value, has faded out into a nightmare. Here was a warning against planned Utopias. I recall a talk on books with an English-speaking Russian girl in the Soviet Union in 1935, and I remember her reply when one of us said that *Brave New World* was regarded by many critics as a satire on Communism—on a planned society. She laughed and said, "Why we regard it as a satire on capitalism!"

Honore Scharrer.

But the Russians, it was said then, had become worshippers of the Machine. Reviewers had expressed concern when they read Soviet novels like *Cement* and *Time, Forward*. It was an ignorant sort of worship, when you considered that the Russians could not learn how to handle machinery. They were always breaking tractors and spoiling engines through sheer incapacity to become machine-minded like ourselves. Some reviewers were very sorry for what they saw in store for the Russians. Just wait and see, they said to the Russians; if you ever do achieve the Machine Age, you will have all of our problems on your hands.

It was true that Soviet novels and plays did celebrate the Machine. In Gladkov's *Cement*, an old German engineer has hidden away and guarded during the fury of the civil war the diesel engines of the factory; he has kept them oiled and shining, as if he were a sort of crazy high priest serving an altar. And when the factory workers return from the Red Army and set clumsily to work to rebuild the social and industrial machinery in the town, those machines come in very handy. "Write the history of factories and plants," Gorky told Kataev, who adds: "Is not the Jaeger concrete mixer with which the shock brigades of proletarian youth set world records more deserving of being preserved in the memory of future generations than the rusty blade of the guillotine which I have seen in one of the gloomy cells of the Conciergerie?"

THE paralyzing conception of the Machine as master has had no power over the Soviet writers. "Nothing," writes Mordecai Gorelik in *New Theatres for Old*, "impresses foreign observers more than the confidence which the Soviet has in the future of machines. Much of the scenic form of its theaters is derived from the machine, and all of its plays are serene in their acceptance of science and machinery. . . . The machine is not considered something artificial and alien to the human spirit, but something which is a natural and wholesome extension of that spirit. It is

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a mistake to blame science and machinery for the chaos which has resulted from the fact that they are not properly geared to the social needs of today."

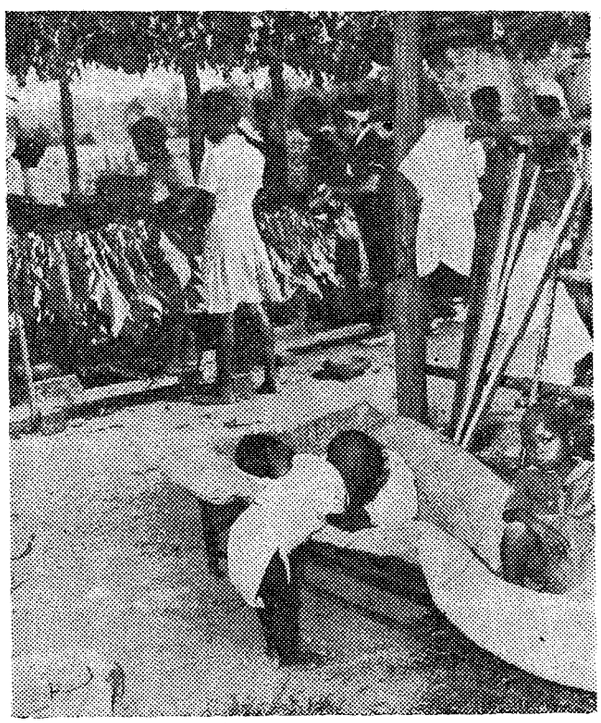
Among our own writers, something of the Soviet attitude has in recent years gained ground over the earlier pessimism. But the old attitudes still find an expression often more eloquent and passionate than the new. Steinbeck, for instance, in his *Grapes of Wrath*, pictures the work of the tractor, controlled by the man sitting in the iron seat, a man who does not look like a man; gloved and goggled, with a dust mask over nose and mouth, a part of the monster, a robot in the seat. . . . "He loved the land no more than the bank loved the land. He could admire the tractor . . . the shining discs, cutting the earth with blades, not plowing but surgery—slicing blades shining, polished by the cut earth. And behind the discs, the harrows combing with iron teeth, so that the little clods broke up and the earth lay smooth. . . . Behind the harrows, the long seeders—twelve curved penes erected in the foundry, orgasms set by gears, raping methodically, raping without passion. . . . And when that crop grew and was harvested, no man had crumbled a hot clod in his fingers, and let the earth sift past his fingertips. No man had touched the seed, or lusted for the growth. Men ate what they had not raised, had no connection with the bread. The land bore under iron and

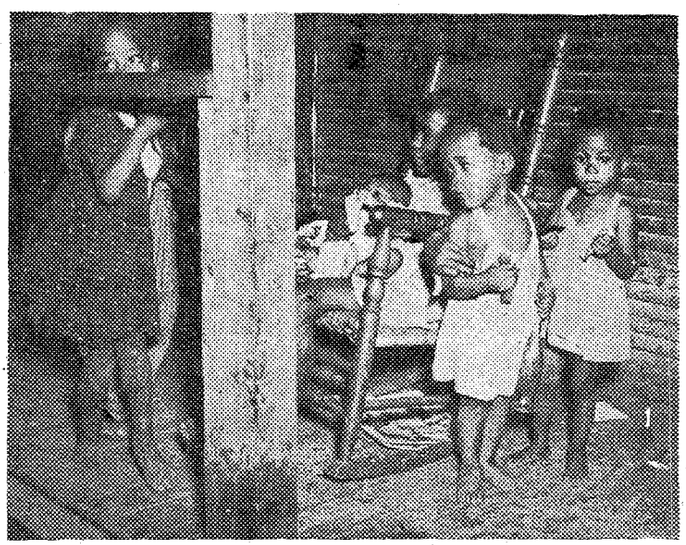
(*Continued on page 26*)

Tobacco Workers

Documentary Photographs

By Rosalie Gwathmey





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READERS' FORUM

Poetry and the People

To New Masses: A cultural upsurge in our country caused by the people's movement against fascism culminating in this just and liberating world war is visible in most fields of creative work. But in the field of poetry, only the bare beginnings of a real people's poetry exist. However, the beginnings are here, starting with the ballads of the Almanac Singers, Richard Dyer-Bennet and others, extending through the work of Norman Corwin on the radio, and showing themselves significantly in the great popularity of Robeson's *Othello*. I am confident that the people will respond in the same way to poetry as they have responded to other fields, both in appreciation and production.

What is the place of the poet? The poet is not a prophet or a world-maker. In the early stages of society before development of writing, the poet recorded what happened, and even acted as a sort of encyclopedia, transmitting the experience of the people in easily memorized form. Then being the source of information about the past and recorder of the present, he could also *attempt* to predict the future. But even then he was not the "world-maker." That role was carried out by the development of the productive forces, and by those large groups of people who were identified with the progressive economic and political changes.

The poet today has to describe in heroic terms the great events of today, and stir the people in a different medium from that of the novelist, artist, teacher, musician, cinematic worker, etc., to move with the forces of progress. He must communicate in his own way the ideas of the political and theoretical leaders of the progressive movement of humanity; his language should help stir those moods among the people that will cause them to do great deeds for progress behind the real leaders and organizers of the people's struggle for freedom.

So the first requisite of a people's poet is modesty; modesty with regard to his own role, understanding the limits of his field but developing his field to the utmost; and modesty in his approach to the people, not preaching, exhorting, declaiming, but speaking as one of them. This commandment of modesty dictates the style of the poet. He will speak for the people only as he speaks from out of their midst to them. And he cannot do this unless he erases everything in his language and mode of expression that puts a barrier between his thought and understanding of it by the people. His verse forms should facilitate communication, not interfere with it; they should make possible easy comprehension, memorizing, singing.

In my opinion the form adopted by many of our poets prevents their work from reaching the people. Poetic form and content are related. The needs of the people's movement today demand a full evaluation of poetic forms, and rejection of all those which hinder communication between the poet and the people.

Here I would like to express what one of my friends called a "discreet criticism" of Whitman. Our American poets have too long been bound by the restrictions in form arising from making a cult of Whitman. . . . Those who have made a cult of Whitman have taken from him only his free verse form, his declaiming and exhorting, and, in some cases only, his orientation on the common man and the facts of everyday existence. But his form of free verse is precisely what makes it hard for his ideas to reach the people.

If our poets should emancipate themselves from the free verse form, what forms should they use? They should use regular metrical forms; they should use rhyme and blank verse. They should distort grammatical structure as little as possible, only departing when metrical or rhyming considerations compel it. They should use words carefully, generally in the accepted sense; they should avoid esoteric classical allusions; they should "make" words only when the precise meaning of the new word coined is clear. They should avoid obscurity like the plague.

It took thousands of years to develop such poetic forms as the use of rhyme, the sonnet, Spenserian stanzas, Shakespearian blank verse, ballad forms, etc. Our poets would be foolish in rejecting these achievements of the human race. Those who try to make completely "new starts" generally produce either a very old error, or an eclectic monstrosity. Leaps are not made from nothing into nothing; they have to be made upon a springboard of some kind.

The people as a whole are wise. Their appreciation of *Othello* shows they recognize Shakespeare as a great poet as well as Robeson as a great artist. The general acceptance of the work of the Almanac Singers and similar ballad singers is just as indicative. These ballads, as well as most Negro spirituals, have their roots among the great poets and singers of the past. Many of these folk songs trace back to Elizabethan ballads, to the products of English poetry's day of flower.

I believe that our people's poets will develop their art on the basis of regular rhyme and rhythm patterns. From the basic popular interest in the lyric forms, it will be possible to develop interest in longer, "heavier," near-epic and epic poetry. It will be possible to break the trammels on expression set by the "magazine verse" standards (epitomized aptly by Edgar Guest), of reactionary platitudes or superficial squeaking set to poor verse. Poets will be able to speak of serious questions in clear language, powerfully and movingly.

Our publications should facilitate this process by giving these poets a place where they can speak on the same platform with scientists, educators, political leaders, theoretical spokesmen and others whose words are listened to with respect. This means the New Masses and the *Daily Worker*

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especially should give more space to poetry, including longer poems (from twenty to thirty lines upwards), in forms other than free verse.

It would be good to have a page once a month in the NEW MASSES open to poetry from the readers, with selection guided by fairly high prosodic standards, though flexible to allow for "learners," and with some short criticism of defects.

These are some remarks I would like to contribute towards a discussion of American poetry and poets. In common with many other people who are busy in all sorts of fields, I have been interested in poetry continually and have written verse for a long time. There is a wider interest in these questions than a lot of us realize.

FRED BASSETT BLAIR.
Chairman of the Wisconsin District,
Communist Political Association.

Mr. Kaiser, Employer

TO NEW MASSES: A good deal of language has been spilled lately about the progressiveness and farsightedness of some of our little big businessmen, as exemplified by Henry J. Kaiser. By inference, if not directly, he has been pictured as also pro-Negro, pro-sixty million jobs after the war, pro-labor and in fact pro everything which would lead our country to a postwar happy hunting ground if only all other capitalists would follow his lead.

Admittedly Mr. Kaiser has made some progressive moves in support of the Roosevelt administration's foreign policy, especially in regard to the Soviet Union—a man in his position, built to prominence by government money under this administration, would be shortsighted indeed if he bit the hand that so generously shoved him into the limelight and filled his pockets. Admittedly too, Mr. Kaiser would like to see government construction on a large scale after the war because the war's end threatens to leave his now greatly expanded construction organization with ghost shipyards on its hands. But let's not go overboard for Mr. Kaiser.

I've worked over three years in Kaiser's Vancouver shipyard—one of his three in the Portland area—and for the record let me say that Mr. Kaiser has not opposed Mr. Roosevelt's executive order giving the Negroes equal employment rights in shipyards under his control. Neither has he made any effort to stamp out prejudice against Negroes among his management. Hiring of Negroes was simply recognized as a war necessity.

There has been and is now discrimination against Negroes in housing in this area. No Negro may enter any white restaurant in the city of Vancouver, Negroes have been and still are fired without reason and ahead of whites. The only reason there has not been a flaring of race riots in this area is the continued existence of inter-racial councils, among which the churches have taken the leadership. Mr. Kaiser and the FBI have weeded out the southern white trouble-makers in the shipyard. For this his organization

Herbert Kruckman.

should be given the credit it deserves. But more credit goes to the FEPC, which has repeatedly protected Negroes against the rankest sort of job discrimination.

In certain circles it has been assumed that men like Kaiser would, during the postwar period, voluntarily raise the wages of their workers. Who the hell ever thought up that one? Recently when this shipyard went off the cost-plus and onto the fixed-price contract (after Kaiser had padded the cost of shipbuilding by hiring thousands of workers more than he needed) hundreds of girls receiving $1.20 per hour for expediting were cut to ninety-five cents. . . .

Let me say further that the Kaiser company's policies in regard to women has been raw in the extreme. Thousands of women have been laid off and were laid off at a time when Kaiser was moaning publicly that labor was deserting its war responsibility. Admiral Vickery came here and scathingly denounced workers for deserting their jobs, of letting down the soldiers. At that precise moment, thousands of Kaiser workers, both men and women, were walking the streets of the area searching for jobs and unable to hire out. . . .

It may come as something of a shock to those who picture Kaiser as willing to share his profits with the workers that from the beginning of the war he has put up weekly prizes ranging from $25.00 war bonds to $100 war bonds to reward workers who invent labor savers. The company has put literally hundreds of these ideas into operation at a saving of untold thousands of dollars. For a handful of change Kaiser has gained hundreds of money-saving ideas—and nowhere has he given public recognition to this debt he owes to the workers—let alone given a raise in pay. . . .

Right now the Kaiser company is launching troop ships as fast as they can hit the water, apparently in an effort to get the present contract out of the way so work can be started on an aircraft carrier contract before the lush war profits come to an end. But for some strange reason the company is not greatly concerned about delivering these troop ships to the government. They pile up along the full length of the outfitting dock and are now being double-decked—that is, ships are being tied alongside other ships. Workers on the outfitting dock complain of having insufficient work, while at the other end of the yard where the carriers are to be laid out, workers are complaining of the feverish drive and incessant push of the management.

Let's be realistic. Kaiser is a capitalist in search of a profit. He has found it to his advantage to be reasonably tolerant politically so long as his power rests so completely on the present administration and to be liberal with money so long as it is government money. If all other capitalists would follow his lead we should still be forced to depend on strong labor unions and strong political action to hold our own against them on the domestic front. We shall yet see how kindly disposed he and others like him are toward labor in the months to come.

A WORKER IN KAISER'S
VANCOUVER SHIPYARD.
Vancouver, Washington.

Kind to Freudians

TO NEW MASSES: Isidor Schneider is kind to the Freudians in his article, "Freud and Literature," in NM (June 19). Seems they were victimized by certain literati. That is, Freudism is merely a "doctor-patient" science which was seized upon and extended procrusteanly into a *Weltanschauung* by the lay literary Freudians in search of an answer to the enigma of life.

The fact is that it is the poor literati who have a just grievance against the professional scientific Freudians. The latter themselves are entirely to blame for their discoveries being presented to the world not merely as scientific data (in which category some of their material does qualify) but also as a world theory and catch-all explanation of everything under the sun, new and old.

The great master himself, Freud, is no less culpable than some of his more extravagant disciples and the amateurs. Did he not try, with pitiful results, to explain such institutions as the church and the state, and such events as war and lynching and other "discontents of civilization"? Had Freud stuck to the clinic and recognized that individual psychological mechanisms are inadequate by themselves to deal with mass social phenomena, there might really have been little point to a conflict between Freudism and Marxism. Nor such a reaction that many of the Marxists (literary and otherwise) have tried to throw out the Freudian baby with the bath.

In any event, isn't it about time that we stopped mentioning Marxism and Freudism in the same breath or on the same level? Really, Brother Schneider, Freudism does not begin to stand up to Marxism, either in the persons of their founders, or as scientific theories, or as ways of life. With all the respect that is due scientific Freudism, I would even pit against it certain psychological insights to be found in Marxist literature.

All of which, of course, is no defense of the above-mentioned literati whom Schneider so well analyzes. As he points out, they got what they were looking for.

New York City. SAMUEL ROBBINS.

(*Continued on page 24*)

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Appeasement of Japan

By Frederick V. Field

WE FACE a crisis in our war against Japan the character of which is so incredible that large sections, perhaps the majority of the American people have failed to grasp its seriousness. There is imminent danger of a deal being made with Japanese fascism. An imperialist peace is desired by highly influential groups in this country of which Under Secretary of State Joseph Grew and several of his State Department colleagues are the principal spokesmen.

There is no doubt that the Japanese are already putting out peace feelers and there is reason to suspect that they may be told, as in effect they have already been told by Captain Zacharias of the American Navy, that all will be well for their monopolies, their totalitarian constitution and their Emperor institution if they will simply go through the motions of offering "unconditional surrender." For example, in the New York *Herald Tribune* of July 17 and 18 correspondent Jack Steele has revealed the terms which are "being given serious consideration by the United States." On the part of Japan these terms would require the return of territories seized by force (i.e., the Cairo formula), "the destruction of the Japanese fleet, the obliteration of its air force, the dismantling of Japan's shipbuilding facilities and the elimination of heavy industries capable of turning out aircraft and munitions." In return the appeasers would refrain from invading or occupying the Japanese home islands, merely sending in a skeleton force to supervise the carrying out of surrender conditions. According to Steele, "the Japanese would be permitted to retain their own form of government, including the Emperor, and to manage their own internal political, economic and social affairs." Just to make things thoroughly comfortable for the Japanese criminals the plan calls for supplying Japanese civilian economy with iron, coal, oil and other resources.

This fantastic and treacherous plan, the *Herald Tribune* correspondent reports, was handed to President Truman on the eve of his departure for Potsdam and is being currently studied by him. The great danger is that American reactionaries and pro-fascists will get away with such an imperialist settlement of their "little quarrel" with Japan simply because so few Americans grasp its reality or significance. For what these appeasers propose for Japan is tantamount to a German policy which would have kept Hitler, Goering and Goebbels in power as "stabilizing forces," which would have stopped the Allied armies at the pre-war Nazi borders, and would then have supplied the Hitlerites with whatever raw materials they needed to recoup their "civilian" economy.

THE American appeasers have several advantages. They can and do disarm public criticism by putting forward, demagogically of course, the popular slogans of "speedy victory" and "unconditional surrender." But by ending the war on an imperialist basis they would actually be preparing the ground for even greater war later on. Let no one make the mistake of underestimating the difficulty of the task in exposing the appeasers' intentions. For perhaps the most effective weapon in the hands of American reactionaries is the widespread lack of knowledge of the structure of Japanese military-fascism. And the public is too easily victimized by the kind of doubletalk that comes from Mr. Grew.

A forthright anti-fascist program for a defeated Japan has been put forward in the July 14 issue of *The Nation* by T. A. Bisson, of the Institute of Pacific Relations. In it he points out the interlocking role of the Japanese Emperor, the *Zaibatsu* (financial-industrial monopolists), militarists, bureaucrats and landlords. To ascribe war guilt to one section of this ruling class, the militarists, as Mr. Grew and his friends attempt to do, and to exonerate the others is to retain the political and economic structure of Japanese fascism while temporarily removing its sword.

Eugene Karlin

Mr. Bisson demands a five-point program to deal with Japanese aggression following military defeat: "(1) elimination of the Emperor system and the intrenched bureaucracy, modeled on that of Prussia; (2) abolition of the baldly authoritarian constitution of 1889, the 'gift' of the Emperor; (3) drafting of a new constitution by a convention of freely elected representatives, one that will rest on the will of the people; (4) destruction of the *Zaibatsu's* armament factories and nationalization of all large peacetime industrial plants; (5) drastic agrarian reforms, designed to end the landlords' rack-renting of millions of tenant farmers." In sharp contrast to the fraudulent terms of the appeasers, Mr. Bisson puts forward a program on the basis of which a genuine democratic people's government may eventually emerge from a defeated Japan.

The issue thus presented by these two programs, one imperialist, the other democratic, is the most crucial one facing the United States today. The answer to this danger must be immediate, vigorous and widespread. We cannot afford to rest complacently in the thought that the Soviet Union will pull us out of this danger as they did in the case of the war against Hitler. We must win this fight ourselves, within our own country.

And in so doing we must not underestimate the strength of the imperialist-appeasers, nor the effectiveness of the weapons at their command. We face a powerful alignment of pro-fascists (Hearst, McCormick, Patterson), reactionaries (Grew and his assistant Dooman), pacifists and Norman Thomas "Socialists," as well as industrialists and such Senators as Capehart of Indiana, who will support any and all measures which promise an eventual alignment of the capitalist powers—with Japan if necessary—against the Soviet Union.

It will require an aroused labor movement and all the country's democratic forces to repel this appeaser movement before it makes greater headway than it already has.

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NM SPOTLIGHT

Crowns and Crimes

IF FRANCO remains in power long enough there may be a monarchy in pain, but certainly it will be a monrchy through which the Madrid uehrer will perpetuate his own dynasty long with the Falange. No one, except for those enamored of royalty, can or a moment believe that Spanish fasism will leave the stage under the aegis of a Don Juan or Don Jaime or that Franco would have proposed the enhronement of another king if such a nove threatened his tyrannical rule. What explains Franco's choice of a nonarchy is his desire to entice, at the moment of the Potsdam Conference, those British and American diplomats who will continue to support him if he reshuffles his regime and gives it a fresh coat of varnish. Churchill is decidedly not averse to a monarchy and within our own State Department the James C. Dunns would be more than happy to take tea with a renovated Alphonso. Franco is, therefore, making all the gestures, even to the extent of enunciating a new "Bill of Rights"—a document so fraudulent that not even Franco takes it seriously. The only question is whether he will succeed. And the only answer is not to leave it to the State Department but to raise a public clamor in support of the Coffee Resolution (HR-312) to break relations with Madrid. As affairs stand now only a widespread and intense campaign can bring the State Department's trafficking with Franco to an end and forestall the tricks he and his friends here hide in their sleeves.

Congress Runs Out

DELEGATIONS of workers who have been laid off by cutbacks have just begun making their appearance in Washington. Congress is now going home—the House this week, the Senate soon. We can just imagine how anxious these gentlemen are to get away from these troublesome problems—unemployment insurance, travel pay for displaced workers, full employment, a health program for America. The House is filled with men who pride themselves on being great anglers — among them Karl Mundt of the un-American Activities Committee. But wherever they go this summer, to the banks of a quiet stream or to the shade of front porches, their peace will be disturbed, it appears. The restful solitude of a man like Roger C. Slaughter of Missouri is apt to be shattered by large numbers of visitors. It was Slaughter who obliged the Republicans on the Rules Committee by voting with the Southern Democrats on FEPC and thus permitting them to vote for it without getting a majority. Perhaps it will be possible for visiting delegations of workers, teachers and community groups to make the recess of these reactionary Congressmen such a busy time that both Houses will return soon.

Meanwhile a group of progressive Congressmen plan to work through the recess organizing communities and labor, small business and professional groups around the need for passing the Full Employment bill. Led by Rep. George E. Outland (D., Cal.), the list of its backers in the House alone now exceeds 100. A smaller but growing lot of Congressmen are circulating petitions to the President calling on him for a revised national wage policy to meet the needs of reconversion.

The Wagner-Murray-Dingell amendments to the Social Security Act provide a platform of broad health policies and plans around which many professional and labor and women's club activities should center. A tax program which does more than offer further "incentives" to profit-swollen corporations is a must, too. The National Lawyers Guild has come forward with one; the CIO is discussing another. The Mead-Pepper, *et al.*, bill for revising the Fair Labor Standards Act by raising the minimum wage to sixty-five cents an hour, making it seventy-five cents in two years; the Kilgore bill on unemployment compensation, and the Wagner-Murray-Patman Full Employment Bill, all call for intense activity in the remaining summer weeks. The permanent Fair Employment Practices Bill, which requires 218 petition signatures to force it out of committee, and the Marcantonio anti-poll tax bill, which requires commitments to vote for cloture in the Senate, are sure to be rallying points for much activity. The anti-labor Ball-Burton-Hatch bill and the Rankin anti-closed shop bill still remain a threat.

Communist Loyalty

THE War Department again has refused to become frightened by Diesism. Its reply to the "revelations" of H. Ralph Burton, counsel to the House Military Affairs Committee, former attorney for Father Charles Coughlin, as to sixteen officers and men and their former activities, suggests the reply of the shipowner, Basil Harris, made when phoned by a *World-Telegram* reporter who told him the National Maritime Union was just full of Reds. Mr. Harris was planning to attend an NMU dinner, and he replied with a short and pithy "So what?" And he went.

The War Department statement was released after a subcommittee issued Burton's testimony as "hearings." The War Department said that thorough investigations "did not lead the Army to conclude that any of the individuals was disaffected or disloyal," and added: "The performance of these officers and soldiers of their military duties during the last three years has clearly evidenced their loyalty to this country and the principles for which this country is fighting." Maj. Gen. William J. Donovan, director of the Office of Strategic Services, also issued a statement praising the "outstanding service" of four of the officers in organizing resistance groups behind enemy lines in north Italy. These were Lt. Milton Wolff, of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, Capt. Irving Goff, another veteran of Spain, Vincent Lossowski and Irving Fajans. This does not mean, of course, that discrimination against Communists or those suspected of left-wing sympathies has been eliminated in the armed forces. As a letter in our Reader's Forum last week pointed out, plenty of it still exists.

In welcoming the War Department's stand, and that of the OSS (whose record against Communists is not unblemished by any means), we would like to observe that if the subcommittee wants to look for real subversives, Mr. Burton himself is there to examine.

Call for a C.P.

THOSE who have been following the discussion pages in the *Daily Worker* in the past two months, on the resolu-

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tion of the National Committee of the Communist Political Association, will hardly be surprised that the convention held last weekend by the New York members of the organization voted unanimously in favor of the resolution's main line. The letters coming to the *Daily Worker* from all over the state and country have already indicated that that was the feeling of the overwhelming majority of Communists.

The convention was marked by the spirit and earnestness of the delegates, and the number of resolutions proposed indicated the deep thinking and thoroughness with which the delegates were tackling the problems before the nation. They proposed that the resolution be strengthened along a number of principal lines, including a detailed analysis of monopoly capitalism in America and a more comprehensive statement concerning the problems of the Negro people. The question of the returning veteran and his ties with labor was also a principal aspect of the discussion.

William Z. Foster, who received a standing ovation from the delegates in tribute to his consistent opposition to the wrong policies that had developed under Earl Browder's leadership, stressed the role of monopoly capitalism today. Emphasizing that the war against Japan was a war of national liberation, he differentiated between the democratic aims of the peoples in this war, and the goals of monopoly capitalists. The people wish to see the destiny of Asia's millions guaranteed along democratic lines, with national independence as the goal; that is not only imperative for the Far Eastern peoples—its fruition involves America's democracy and peace. Mr. Foster also pointed out that long-term peace is possible, but only on the basis of consistent vigilance and struggle against the monopolists who seek wars for their own purposes. He emphasized that constant mobilization of the people for the democratic objectives in the war against Japan can defeat the designs of the imperialists.

Space and our deadline do not permit a full account of Mr. Foster's speech and the discusion; we can only mention further that Mr. Foster emphasized that Communists stand four-square behind the no-strike pledge, but pointed out that when strikes do occur, labor should fully analyze all the attendant circumstances, and base its attitude toward the individual strikes upon these factors. The convention reconvenes August 12 for a two-day session, when we will be able to give a fuller account of the proceedings.

Japan's Front Yard

"FOURTH of July in Hell" was the picturesque comparison used by a naval gunner to describe what Admiral Halsey's Third Fleet did to Japan's coastline last week. The great combined air and sea attack which ushered in the new phase of direct assault against the Japanese homeland lasted ten days. During these ten days the Third Fleet roamed Japan's "front moat," bombarding at a range of two to fifteen miles various important strategic objectives between the southern tip of the northernmost island of Hokkaido and the southernmost cape of the main island of Honshu. Six great battleships (one of them H.M.S. King George V) were named; with them were an estimated twelve to fifteen carriers whose planes flew 6,000 missions from distances offshore entailing only a few minutes flying time. Dozens of cruisers and destroyers (some of them also British) protected the "big stuff" and took part

(*Continued on page 26*)

Reader's Forum

(*Continued from page 20*)

TO NEW MASSES: In the last ten years or more, Americans have seen many formerly obscure progressive-minded writers, actors, painters, and other artists accepted into existing standard commercial publications and companies. This has been one of the many healthy effects of the fresh, ringing, realistic cultural outburst of the depression days in America, plus the effect of wartime cooperation. The importance of this transfusion of fresh progressive blood into the veins of standard commercial-minded and semi-reactionary organs of expression should not be underestimated.

Yet it remains that young progressive artists in general—and writers in particular—still have far from sufficient outlet for their work. Fresh, far-sighted, outspoken stories, articles, plays, and poetry will come out of this war period—in fact, they are already beginning to emerge. The established organs will not be able to handle the volume, nor is it likely that those publications will do much to encourage progressive writers.

Separately, and taking the lead, a progressive magazine with a broad base of circulation in trade unions, as well as through standard channels, is needed. Primarily, such a magazine should be devoted to writing—short stories, poetry, articles, plays, radio scripts. It might be a good idea if a portion of such a magazine were devoted to discussion of cultural subjects, both by artists of all kinds *and by readers*. Such discussion would be useful in drawing lay readers closer to artists, and artists closer to their essential audience—the common people of America.

For—let us be crystal-clear on this—it is not being proposed here that an esoteric "little literary magazine" be founded. The proposal is for a magazine that will express the common man, express *for* the common man through those writers who believe in him and basically *are* him. Such a magazine should establish a solid base of sale through the ever-increasing bookshops and literature tables of the common man's club—the trade union. Add to this base a sale through newsstands and subscriptions, and such a magazine is well on its way.

In 1943 Michael Gold, author of *Jews Without Money*, saw the need and expressed himself about it thus: "We ought to start a literary magazine to bring up to the new generation of writers. . . . In ten years there will be a social literature produced in America such as we have never dreamed of. Let us prepare the soil now for the immense harvest."

It should be emphasized that such a magazine should not be sectarian in content or style. In its selection of material, in its attitude toward various writing styles, in its attitude toward legitimate discoveries of psychology, in its taste and modernness of physical makeup, it should utilize all the advances made in the past by artists who were not necessarily interested in the common man; it should use them precisely *for the benefit of* the working man and the well-meaning but unfocussed middle-class person. It will take a wise merging of new attitudes and old (but sound) attitudes, a nicely-gauged synthesis of new forms and styles with forms and styles that have been made familiar by the *Saturday Evening Post* and other organs that the people know well. The basic purpose is to reach *as wide an audience as possible*, finding a common denominator of approach for all corners of the country, and for the small town and big city alike.

In case the reader thinks the scarcity of periodicals satisfactorily and fully open and encouraging to progressive writers is exaggerated, let's look at some magazines that come to mind: *The Protestant* is limited by its religious-sounding name and its apparent adherence mainly or entirely to articles. *The Nation* and *The New Republic* also publish little outside of articles. Likewise NEW MASSES. *Direction*, a progressive magazine of the arts, never tried for a wide appeal or big circulation; at this writing it appears to have delivered up the ghost. *Story* is still a fairish bet, but long ago abandoned its original vigor and forthright encouragement of new progressive writers; nor is it slanted toward a very wide audience. *Reader's Scope*, an excellent antidote to the poisonous *Reader's Digest*, has mainly reprints and articles. *Jewish Survey* is limited by its special field. *The Span*, a relatively unknown small magazine of people's poetry and prose, is handicapped by lack of money, publicity, and good physical appearance. *Tomorrow* is all articles.

Newsstands today are glutted with magazines; magazines are born at the drop of a hat—and some die that way. The reader may ask if the magazine proposed here can survive. This writer thinks it will survive and grow, because reader and writer alike need it.

New York. LAWRENCE BARTH.

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Pablo Neruda: Poet, Statesman

By Samuel Putnam

With this issue, Pablo Neruda becomes a contributing editor of New Masses. This is a highly significant cultural event. It is an event for New Masses and its readers. It is significant for the world of modern poetry, in the light that it has to throw upon the poet's—the artist's, the intellectual's—evolving relationship to the world of modern man.

Critical superlatives are always dangerous; they lay the one who employs them open to the charge of immaturity. However, if one were to assert that Pablo Neruda (in private life, Neftali Reyes) is the finest Spanish language poet since Federico Garcia Lorca, I do not believe that there would be many competent voices to contradict him. Nor would one be running much more of a risk in asserting that Neruda and Ruben Dario, who died in 1916, are the two towering peaks of Latin American poetry. In any event, the former is unchallengeably one of the major figures in the contemporary poetic scene, without regard to geography.

Indeed, if there is any vital relation between the poet's art and society—which in the last analysis is simply to say: between poetry and human life; if it is at all the poet's business to reflect life in the large, rather than the mere nuances of personal feeling, then Pablo Neruda must rank very high in a period in which so many of our most gifted singers, turning their backs on the greatest drama in recorded history, have sought mystic havens of escape, subjective oases in a world of B-29's. One thinks of the author of *The Waste Land* and the host of little Eliots, of Auden and the Audenites and the palpable course they are steering, of Pound and his treason—— And then, one remembers Neruda's *Spain in the Heart (Espana en el Corazon)*, that "Hymn to the Glories of the People in War," written in the midst of the Spanish struggle and set up in type by the front-line Loyalist fighters.

One thinks of this resplendent battle-song, whose aesthetic qualities not even the hyperaesthete would deny, and of a number of other equally fine poems which Neruda later wrote, in what was for him a time of intense poetic activity, as the Red Army battled its way westward, past Kharkov, Stalingrad, Sevastopol—inspiring landmarks, each of them, to one who was becoming all the while more and more of a people's poet, and more and more conscious of the fact. Read his "Love Song to Stalingrad."

For Pablo Neruda *is* a people's poet—he has *become* a people's poet. This must inevitably be stressed in any adequate consideration of his work, with a special emphasis on the *becoming*. It is the failure to grasp the phenomenon of social and poetic growth which he exemplifies that accounts for the one-sided estimates of his poetry that are to be encountered in literary magazines and scholastic journals; although one frequently has the impression that the critics in question are guilty of a willful shortsightedness: they are blind because they do not wish to see, and accordingly prefer to give us the Neruda whom Pablo Neruda himself has outgrown or cast off, the scars of a chrysalis that has long since been shed.

In Latin America, back in the 1930's, there was a continent-wide fashion of writing—for fashion it was—among poets that came to be known as *"Nerudismo,"* and which Neruda had to repudiate. He had gone on; his imitators were left with the husk. Such is the penalty of greatness.

But in order to understand what happened to him, it is necessary to go back to the period immediately following World War I. We are all of us familiar by this time with the mood of despair that laid hold of the most capable poets in the after-war years. Down in his native Chile, Neruda felt this, too, and it is not without significance that his first noteworthy volume should have borne the title, *Crepusculario*, or "Twilight Book." Published in 1923, one year after *The Waste Land*, this collection showed much the same tendency as did the Eliot poem, toward a formalization of bourgeois despair. *Crepusculario* and the work that followed in 1924, the *Twenty Love Poems and a Despairing Song* (*Veinte Poemas de Amor y una Cancion Desesperada*), are filled with what has been described, and not without good reason, as a charnel house imagery. They represent what the poet has called his "formal" period, although his form was never as tight, as arid and constipated as Eliot's.

It is to be noted that this period was a brief one, lasting only two years, from 1923 to 1925. Then began what the poet calls his "informal" one, from 1925 to the outbreak of the Spanish War, in 1936. During this ten-year interregnum, in 1931 and 1935, Neruda published his best known work, the two-volume collection entitled *Residencia en la Tierra* (Residence on the Earth). One novel, the only one he has written, saw the light in 1926; it was entitled *El Habitante y Su Esperanza* (The Inhabitant and His Hope).

The very titles that the poet gave his books during this second period—"Residence on the Earth," "The Inhabitant and His Hope"—are meaningful; in themselves, they hint that he was progressing from the "twilight" and the "despairing song" of his youth to a deep questioning of life's purpose. It was Spain, the people's Spain, that was to provide the beginning of the answer. As with Malraux, "man's fate" was becoming "man's hope."

Then, in the later 1930's and early 1940's, came the period of the life-and-death struggle against world fascism. Spain, the sight of what happened at Almeria, his first-hand acquaintance with the International Brigades, whose laureate he was to be—these things it was that brought the poet out of his chrysalis, out of the charnel house of old. He was now not only a poet, but a fighter, a poet who fought with his verses and when necessary, with the anti-fascist populace in the street, as he did in Mexico City. (He was wounded on one occasion.) During the years that he was Chilean consul in the Mexican capital, he never let diplomacy interfere with the rights of man; never once did he take refuge in his position and keep silent when his voice should have been heard. He is one of the most courageous and honest of living poets.

Being honest, and with a new purpose before him, that of writing for the people, he is conscious of his limitations. He tells us that it is hard for him to change his matured style. There are clinging remnants of the old imagery, the old formalization and stylization; but during the last few years—from 1942, let us say—both images and style have been undergoing a change of which the poet himself, possibly, is not fully aware.

And in any case—"I should like to see the people's level of comprehension raised so that they can penetrate with

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the poet into all the richness of the modern world." Note that it is now a "rich" world for Neruda, no longer a charnel house; for he found the world when he found the people that inhabit it, the residents of this earth and the hope that is theirs.

In connection with writing for the people, Neruda says: "I feel very humble in this task. To write for the people is too great an ambition. Antonio Machado put it well when he said that only two men in all history have succeeded in writing for the masses: Shakespeare and Cervantes."

In the light of all this, it is not hard to understand why Neruda should readily accept the position which NEW MASSES has offered him. A real fighter knows his fellow fighters when he sees them. One thinks of a Pablo Picasso in France. It is, surely, indicative of a new world in the making when a painter like Picasso and a poet like Neruda take their stand with the people and find in so doing a new meaning for their art.

WORKS OF PABLO NERUDA
(*In Spanish*)

La Cancion de la Fiesta (*poems*), Santiago de Chile, Editorial Juventud, 1921. (Neruda's first published volume.)

Crepusculario: Poemas, Santiago de Chile, Editorial Nascimento, 1923; second edition, 1926. (Written in 1919, before *Cancion de la Fiesta.*)

Veinte Poemas de Amor y una Cancion Desesperada, Santiago de Chile, Editorial Nascimento, 1924; second edition, 1932; Buenos Aires, Editorial Tor, 1934.

Tentativa del Hombre Infinito (Poems), Santiago de Chile, Editorial Nascimento, 1926.

El Habitante y Su Esperanza (Novel), Santiago de Chile, Editorial Nascimento, 1926.

Anillos: Prosas (with Tomas Lago), Santiago de Chile, Editorial Nascimento, 1926.

El Hondéro Entusiasta: Poema, Santiago de Chile, Empresa Letras, 1933 (Cuadernos de Poesia, num. 2). (Written 1923-1924.)

Residencia en la Tierra (Poems), Santiago de Chile, Editorial Nascimento, 1933; Madrid, Cruz y Raya, 1935; 2 vols. (Ediciones de Arbol.)

Tres Cantos Materiales, published in *Homenaje a Pablo Neruda*, Madrid, Plutarco, 1935.

Espana en el Corazon, Spain, 1937. (This work was set up and printed by the Loyalist soldiers in the front lines. A copy of the original edition is in the Library of Congress, Hispanic Foundation.)

Nuevo Canto de Amor a Stalingrado, Mexico, 1943.

(In addition to his creative work in verse and prose, Neruda is a translator, having rendered into Spanish William Blake, Anatole France, Quevedo, and Villamediana. There is a large number of critical studies of Neruda in Spanish. Two of particular interest and readily available, having to do with his imagery and style, are: "Pablo Neruda en su Extremo Imperio," by Concha Melendez, *Revista Hispanica Moderna*, ano III, num. 1, octubro, 1936, pp. 1-32; and "Algunos Simbolos Insistentes en la Poesia de Pablo Neruda," by Amado Alonso, *Revista Hispanica Moderna*, Ano V, num. 3, julio, 1939, pp. 191-220.)

WHAT TO READ ON PABLO NERUDA IN ENGLISH

The Modernist Trend in Spanish American Poetry, by D. S. Craig, Berkeley, Cal., University of California Press, 1934, pp. 330-333 (with translations of poems).

"Pablo Neruda in Mexico," by Maurice Halperin, *Books Abroad*, Vol. 15, No. 2, April, 1941, pp. 164-168. (A very interesting interview with the poet.)

"Pablo Neruda," by Samuel Putnam, NEW MASSES, March 16, 1943, pp. 23-25. (Deals with Neruda and Ruben Dario.)

"Poet of Strife," by Angel Flores, *The Inter-American*, Vol. II, No. 5, May, 1943.

NERUDA'S POEMS IN ENGLISH

An Anthology of Contemporary Latin American Poetry, edited by Dudley Fitts, Norfolk, Conn., New Directions, 1942.

12 Spanish American Poets, edited and translated by H. R. Hays, Yale University Press, 1942, pp. 240-265.

"Spain Within My Heart," translated by Lloyd Mallan, *Smith College Monthly*, Vol. III, No. 4, February, 1943, pp. 7-9.

"Phantom of the Freighter," translated by H. R. Hays, Latin American Issue of *Poetry*, Vol. LXII, No. 11, pp. 62-64.

Japan's Front Yard

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in the bombardment which consisted of 1,000-ton salvos of shells.

Meanwhile land-based planes were not sitting idle. Superfortresses from the Marianas made 2,000 flights and dropped something like 12,000 tons of fire bombs on Japanese objectives. Medium bombers and fighters from Okinawa and Iwo joined in the huge operation, blasting the airfields of Kyushu, the railroads of Korea, the defenses of Formosa, and Japanese shipping in the inner seas, including the key bottleneck of communications of Tsushima Strait.

Four separate warship strikes, six separate carrier attacks and four Superfort strikes were made between July 10 and 20—ten days which the Japanese people will hardly forget and which their leaders will have a tough time explaining away. During the fateful ten days of the combined attacks more than 400 Japanese ships, including the battleship Nagato, were sunk or damaged, and more than 500 Japanese planes destroyed or damaged. While this was going on, our planes from the Philippines ranged over Celebes and Borneo. Australian troops made another landing on Borneo. Fighting flared up in the long-forgotten theater of New Guinea (in the region of Wewak where Japanese garrisons are "dryin on the stalk." Chinese Kuomintan troops fought inconclusive see-saw battles around Kweilin and near Swatow, losing ground and gaining some but still failing to cut the last threa of Japanese communications betwee Hankow and Canton and Indo-China

Men and Machines

(*Continued from page* 18)

under iron gradually died; for it wa not loved or hated, it had no prayer or curses." Here is a soil-mysticism worthy of Knut Hamsun.

But 150 pages further on, Steinbeck reflects: "Is a tractor bad? Is the power that turns the long furrows wrong? I this tractor were ours, it would be good —not mine, but ours. If our tractor turned the long furrows of our land it would be good. Not my land but ours. We could love that tractor then as we have loved this land when it was ours. . . . Only a little multiplication now and this land, this tractor, are ours. The two men squatting in a ditch, the little fire, the side-meat stewing in a single pot, the silent stone-eyed women behind, the children listening with their souls to words their minds do not understand. The night draws down. The baby has a cold. Here, take this blanket. It's wool, it was my mother's blanket—take it for the baby. This is the thing to bomb. This is the beginning—from 'I' to 'we.'"

To conclude: Has the question raised by the Machine yet been answered—blessing or curse? The Nazis brought the robots from behind the footlights of melodrama out upon the stage of world history. The Waste Land of the poet's imagination—"these fragments have I shored against my ruins" —became the landscape of our daily news broadcasts. And the Russians mastered the machine in time to save—ironically enough—the American and English capitalist nations. Perhaps the poets and playwrights and novelists may help to make the scales dip on the side of blessing rather than curse, if from now on they can do as well with the theme of mastery over the machine as in the past decades they have done with that of destruction by the machine. Is this perhaps a version of the old problem, unsolved even by the genius of a Dostoevsky or a Milton, of making God more interesting than Satan?

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The Art Season's End

By Moses Soyer

ANOTHER exciting and busy art season has drawn to a close. It was highlighted by one-man shows of such great European artists as Degas, Renoir, Rouault, Picasso, Maillol; by group shows such as Masterpieces of Dutch Art, the Child Through Four Centuries, the Whitney show of the work of European artists in America, the Artists League of America, the American Group and the seaman shows; the first Pepsi-Cola and the *Britannica* exhibitions, and one-man exhibitions by American artists too numerous to mention. The encouraging thing about it all was the fact that American art, as I said in a previous review, has proved itself vigorous, attuned to the times, and full of promise. Noteworthy among the one-man shows of this season were those of Marguerite Zorach, Doris Rosenthal, Georgia O'Keefe, Lena Gurr, Sara Berman Beach and Margaret Lowengrund. Among the first one-man shows, those of Charles Keller, Cpl. Milton J. Wynne and Nova seemed to hold forth most promise. The entrance of private industry into the field of art patronage was a significant event of the year.

The ACA gallery has completed its season with an unusual exhibition of pen and ink drawings by a young American soldier, Cpl. Milton J. Wynne. In conjunction with the exhibition the gallery published soldier Wynne's prose poem *Why I Hate the Nazis*. The drawings are incorporated in the book. Corporal Wynne has experienced war at first hand, having served as a member of the Air Corps in the campaigns of Africa, Sicily, Corsica and Italy. He has seen the black misery and human degradation the brave fascists and Nazis have wrought upon the world. He writes with a fervor and passionate hatred that "cuts deeply into our consciousness like a keen razorblade," to quote Herman Baron's introduction. To me, the visions he conjures up with words are more vivid and stark than those expressed in line. I feel that when Corporal Wynne adds to the fine emotional quality of his drawings a greater knowledge of line and form, which he now lacks because of youth and lack of experience, his work will gain greater power. The drawings are executed somewhat in style of the German expressionists, and also betray a slight influence of John Groth, Gropper and others. In spite of all this, the drawings and the book combined show a fine talent.

WHILE I am concerned with publications I should also like to say a few words about the monthly published by the ACA gallery and edited by Charles Steingart. I have before me as I write the first thirteen issues and I am really impressed by the important material they contain. Some of its contributors have been Oliver Larkin of Smith College, Elizabeth McCausland, Elizabeth Olds, Philip Evergood, Irene Rice Pereira, Harry Sternberg, Burliuk and John Groth. The usually well written and carefully documented articles deal with problems that face the artist. Among other things it has contained an important essay on Picasso by Juan Marinello, which originally appeared in NEW MASSES, "The Museum and the Community," by Holger Cahill, "The American Tradition," by Elizabeth McCausland, a letter on Russian art in wartime, "Art for Veterans," by Victor D'Amico, and a "Gallery Director's Diary," by Herman Baron. The magazine is well illustrated and attractively printed. Two other books published by the ACA gallery this year are *Picasso*, by Elizabeth McCausland and *Moses Soyer*, by Bernard Smith.

The Artists League of America dedicated the most important issue of its official publication, the *ALA News*, to members in the armed forces. It contained, among other things, greetings to the artist-soldiers from Lynd Ward, Rockwell Kent, Philip Evergood and Yasuo Kuniyoshi; an article on the GI Bill of Rights, by Bill Sanders, an interesting letter on Italian art and artists from Jacob Landau and many letters from artists from the various fronts.

WITH the cessation of war on the European continent, an international exchange of art has become possible. Pioneering work in this field is being done by the artists' committee of the National Council for American-Soviet Friendship. Last year this committee sent canvas, paint, brushes, etc., to the Russian artists. This year it is sending a collection of photographs of the work of some 150 American artists and 100 illustrators, in the hope that the Russian artists and people will get from these photographs some idea of what we are doing over here. The Russians will be asked in turn to send us a representative collection of photographs of their work. The collection is being shown prior to its being sent overseas at the Associated American Artists Galleries, until August 4. On July 24 there was a preview at which formal presentation of the collection was made by the committee to the representatives of the Soviet Union. The chairman of the committee is Paul Manship. Its vice chairmen are Jo Davidson, Rockwell Kent, Leon Kroll (who is also chairman of the committee of selection), John Sloan and Max Weber.

ANOTHER fine contribution to art made during the season has been artist Frank Kleinholz's Wednesday radio program "There's Art in New York." With great skill and tact Mr. Kleinholz has brought to the people of New York the problems and strivings of the artist both from a technical and social point of view. Among the people he interviewed were not only artists but also forward-looking directors of museums and writers on art. Mr. Kleinholz's method has been one of informality and intimacy. The listener has been made to feel as if he himself were drawn into the circle as a participant in a friendly and pertinent exchange of views on art. Perhaps the most unusual program in the series was the one in which Mr. Kleinholz had as his guests artist George Picken, veteran of World War I, and Joe Hirsh, artist correspondent of World War II. The reminiscences and the note-comparing of these two men were extremely interesting.

FOLLOWING the present trend of private industry's entrance into the field of art, the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 177 years old, has come forward with a large, if not altogether comprehensive, collection of contemporary American art. Beginning its national tour in Chicago, it has just completed the New York showing at the International Building in Radio City. I say it is not comprehensive, even though I realize the difficulties attendant to forming such a collection and that the number of acquisitions had presumably to be kept within certain limits. The collection contains too many items that could be classi-

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Seven Poets in Search of an Answer

Edited by THOMAS YOSELOFF
With a Foreword by Shaemas O'Sheel

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fied as illustrations bordering on commercial art. It also contains paintings by artists who have as yet, because of youth and inexperience, made little contribution to American art that is far-reaching or profound. On the other hand, there are many glaring omissions—so many, in fact, that another collection just as representative, if not more so, could be formed with pictures by artists not represented in the *Britannica* collection. However, the collection I understand, is as yet incomplete. In time, *Britannica* hopes to include work by other artists, for the "vitality of such a collection, like art itself, should not remain static." As it stands at present it could be described as interesting, provoking and uneven with good pictures obviously in the minority. In conjunction with the collection the *Encyclopedia* published a sumptuous catalog in which all the paintings are reproduced, with some in color. It also contains short, pert biographies of the artists and appraisals of their work by Grace Pagano.

I WOULD like to close this article by extending best wishes to artist Fred Ellis, whose sixtieth birthday was observed by his friends on the ninth of July. Ellis has dedicated his fine talent to progress and to betterment of the human race. He is known and loved by workers the world over. His drawings hang on the walls of the Museum of Western Art in Moscow. In the history of the American political cartoon Fred Ellis will occupy a high place, alongside that of Art Young, Gropper and Fitzpatrick.

Films of the Week

AT LAST Hollywood has made a film of the greatest event of our times: the liberation of the peoples of Europe from enslavement. The scene is Italy, and the people the heirs of Mazzini and Garibaldi and the contemporaries of Togliatti and Nenni and the thousands of brave men who suffered and died for a free Italy. The picture deals with the coming of democracy to that harassed country, but I would rather not be in Rome when and if it receives its Italian premiere there.

For *A Bell for Adano*, at the Radio City Music Hall, includes among its characters not only no Italian of the Resistance, but no Italian of any sense of dignity and self-reliance. Instead we have a collection of the usual stereotypes Hollywood has been passing off on us for years as Italians, a group

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which the movies have maligned more consistently than any other except the Negroes. Of course, it was too bad that John Hersey's otherwise admirable book, on which the film is based, was without an echo of the struggle of the Italian people themselves for their own liberation; but the Twentieth-Century Fox minds through which the book was filtered have added "comic" touches of their own and eliminated almost all of the real dignity and charm Hersey's Italians possessed. Again, it is true that when Hersey wrote his novel only the south of Italy, where guerrilla activity was minor, had been liberated; but today the full story of the Italian struggle is available and there is no artistic law that would have prevented the Fox high command, among its other "adaptations," from bringing the story up to date. *A Bell for Adano* will be accepted by the millions who see it as a portrait of the Italian people, and the portrait is false.

The first three minutes of the film are excellent. An American jeep approaches the village of Adano, winds through the ruined buildings and past an immense poster of Mussolini, and draws up before the city hall. Major Joppolo and his sergeant survey the deserted scene, jump out and go into the city hall. Their talk is good American Army talk; we believe it.

And then come the Italians. The first is a boot-licker, the second a phony "anti-fascist," the third pompous, the fourth a liar. When the comic possibilities of this scene are exhausted, we get the business about the bell, and it almost seems a false note to find that these vaudeville actors have serious aspirations, deep longings that to them are symbolized by their loved bell, which should be ringing out over Adano, drawing their lives together. Major Joppolo, played soberly by John Hodiak, understands their need for the stolen bell, and undertakes to get another one for them. He is a "good man"; he tries to bring democracy to Adano, as well as food. But both, according to the American Army concept, are products to be handed out from above.

There is much excellent material in the book, and some of it has, necessarily, found its way to the screen. The scene in which Joppolo robs the chief of the caribinieri of his traditional place at the head of the breadline is preserved, with its meaning for democracy, as is the angry reception the people give their fascist ex-mayor when he sneaks down from the hills. The characterizations and dialogue of the Americans are con-

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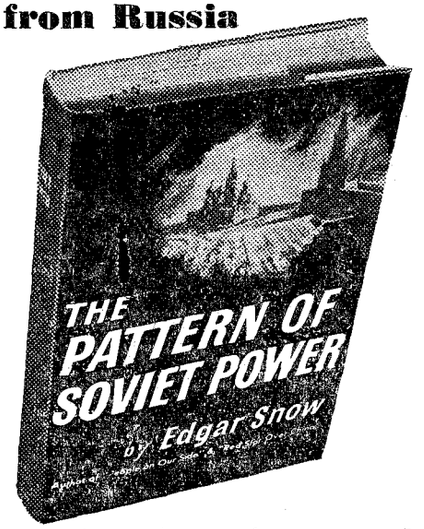

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vincing throughout, and the homecoming of the demobilized Italian soldiers is very moving.

But Hersey's savage indictment of certain Army brass and his witty comments on old-school-tieism in the Navy have been given a washing and have come out here bleached to something near white. On the minus side too must be listed the characterization of the girl with whom Joppolo seeks to dull his loneliness. To say that Gene Tierney is miscast doesn't quite answer the question: the fundamental trouble is that she has been coated with the same varnish of Hollywood falsity that lowers the tone of the whole picture.

A Bell for Adano could have been a great film, for America, Italy and the liberated world. Perhaps the film it should have been will yet be made.

A REMARKABLE half-hour documentary, *San Pietro*, appeared last week at the Fifty-fifth Street Playhouse. Produced by the Pictorial Service of the US Army Signal Corps, it records the actual liberation of an Italian village by the American Army, and *A Bell for Adano* could have taken some tips from it. First we see scenes of the military struggle for San Pietro—in which, incidentally, Italian troops took part, helping to free their own people. The film's writer and director, Maj. John Huston, and supervisor, Col. Frank Capra, have produced some of the most brilliant and compelling battle scenes of the war. The cameras advance through fog and smoke on the heels of the forward patrols; they dive into foxholes with the men. The film is perhaps as great a tribute to the cameramen's valor as it is to that of the GI's we see die before our eyes, whom we see gaping-mouthed and twisted in death and finally sewn into white sacks and buried. Then the town is won, and the people creep back from the hills and begin digging in the rubble for their homes, for their loved ones. There is nothing comic about these Italians; there is nothing quaint about the shot of the man who finds his wife under a heap of stone and pulls her out, kissing her dead face tearfully, or about the weeping women who look on. And we find nothing to smile at in the frightful, numbing poverty we see here. Instead, the commentary, which speaks with an almost offensive cheerfulness of the liberation we Americans have brought to San Pietro, makes us painfully aware of the role our AMG has played in Italy, that the touching, hungry children we see climbing about the ruins are still hungry, and

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that we have not yet begun to meet the challenge presented us by that country's San Pietros and Adanos.

IF YOU must go to the Roxy one of these days, try to get there at the end of the stage-show when Abbott and Costello go into their routine about the baseball players named Who, What and I Don't Know. But don't stay for *Nob Hill*, unless you are mad about all those other pictures Hollywood has made about the Barbary Coast. Peggy Ann Garner, the promising star of *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, is bundled up in a heavy Irish accent and sent out to hack her way through a schmaltzy plot in which George Raft is a well-behaved honkytonk proprietor and Vivian Blaine has beautiful legs and stars in his floor show. They exchange warm glances, but then along comes Joan Bennett, who lives on Nob Hill and can make herself understood to her maid only in French. She too gives George the eye and we're off for another whirl in the Twentieth-Century Fox clichemobile. It's a machine that uses a lot of gas, and I hope the ration board gets after Twentieth-Century because this trip was absolutely not necessary. BETTY MILLARD.

(Joseph Foster, NM's movie critic, is still in Hollywood.)

Movie Check List

The Clock. A charming though somewhat unreal account of a GI on a forty-eight-hour pass, with his girl.

Conflict. Slick, well-constructed melodrama which doesn't quite come off. But Bogart and Greenstreet are worth the fare.

Corn Is Green. Starts off as a serious film on education in rural nineteenth-century England, changes its mind part way, and ends up as a "will-he-make-it-or-will-he-not?"

It's a Pleasure. The newest Sonja Henie ice classic. A minimum of skating and a maximum of bad acting. Not kept on the ice quite long enough.

The Last Hill. Stirring adaptation of Voyetekhov's novel, *The Last Days of Sevastopol.* See it.

Royal Scandal. History treated as a plot writer's after-breakfast assignment. This one has the hangover touch.

Those Endearing Young Charms. Robert Young is the wolf of a tedious triangle.

Where Do We Go From Here? Fred MacMurray tangles with history in a moderately amusing comedy of anachronisms.

Without Love. Ingratiating and humorous film with Tracy and Hepburn, on matters of total unimportance.

Wonder Man. Well, you know it has Danny Kaye, so what are you waiting for?

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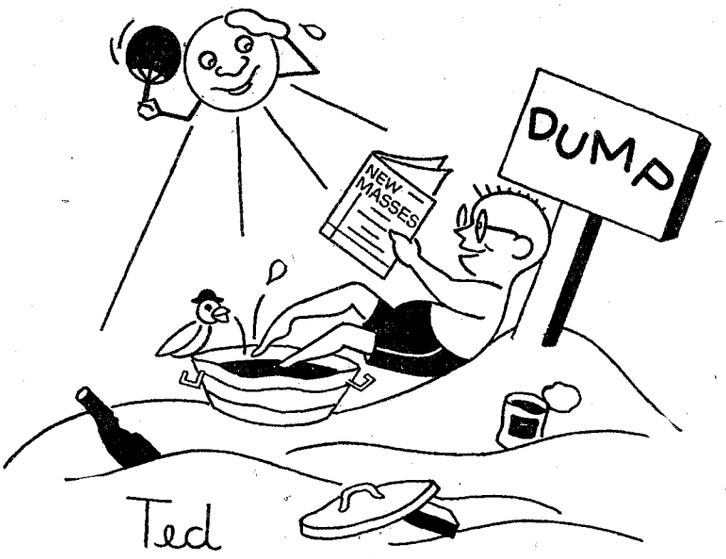

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